

Hafa Adai!

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# Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXXIV, Issue No. 198

www.saipantribune.com

THURSDAY OCTOBER 3, 2024

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## Marijuana removed from drug testing requirements



By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**  
kimberly\_esmores@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios has signed into law House Bill 23-50 which essentially removes marijuana from all pre-employment drug testing for government employees.

Yesterday, Palacios wrote to Senate President Edith DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) and House Speaker Edmund Villagomez (Ind-Saipan) informing the Legislature that he has signed H.B. 23-50 and it is now Public Law 23-27.

Public Law 23-27 basically

removes marijuana from all pre-employment drug testing for government employees with certain exceptions.

According to a previous article on the Saipan Tribune, Rep. Diego Vincent F. Camacho (D-Saipan), who is the

See **MARIJUANA** on Page 4

## China missile test cause of concern for CNMI

By **MARK RABAGO**  
mark\_rabago@saipantribune.com  
EDITOR

Island leaders are worried about China's recent missile test after a dummy warhead landed in the Pacific Ocean last week.

The launch was part of routine training by the People's Liberation Army's Rocket Force, which is in charge of

conventional and nuclear missile operations, and was not aimed at any country or target, the People's Republic of China's Defense Ministry said in a statement.

Glen D. Hunter, Gov. Arnold I. Palacios' special assistant of CNMI Broadband Policy Development, said the recent missile launch by China

See **CHINA** on Page 4

### OCTOBER IS CNMI HUMANITIES MONTH

A proclamation designating October as CNMI Humanities Month was signed by Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang yesterday morning at the San Vicente Roundhouse. See story on Page 2

RACQUEL FLOYD

## DYS: Child welfare cases increase by 16% in 2024

By **RACQUEL H. FLOYD**  
raxfloyd@gmail.com  
CORRESPONDENT

Child welfare cases increased by 16% from 459 cases in 2023 to 534 cases in 2024, according to Division of Youth Services administrator Vivian Sablan during a media conference held

yesterday at the DYS Center on Capitol Hill.

The 534 cases in 2024 involves 1,459 children.

The case distribution of the child welfare cases in 2024 is 508 on Saipan involving 1,400 children, nine on Tinian involving 19 children, and 17 cases on Rota with 40 children involved.

See **DYS** on Page 4



RACQUEL FLOYD

From left, Division of Youth Services Child Protective Services acting supervisor for Mariah Barcinas, DYS administrator Vivian Sablan, and DYS case worker Juanicia Villanueva during a media conference yesterday at the DYS Youth Center on Capitol Hill.

## 'Lack of operations funding will handicap Legislative Bureau'

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**  
kimberly\_esmores@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

The Appropriations and Budget Authority Act of 2025, which was signed into law last Monday, did not allocate funding for the Legislative Bureau's operations. The bureau has raised concerns stating this will hand-

icap them.

In a letter to House Speaker

edmund Villagomez (Ind-Saipan) and Senate President Edith DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan), Legislative Bureau director Perry John P. Tenorio emphasized the critical

position the agency will be

See **LACK** on Page 4



Tenorio

### INSIDE



#### LOCAL

An estimated 200,000 book lovers joined the Library of Congress National Book Festival in person on Aug. 24, 2024 at the Washington Convention Center.

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#### WORLD

Iran launched at least 180 missiles into Israel on Tuesday, the latest in a series of escalating attacks in a yearslong conflict between Israel and Iran and its Arab allies that threatens to push the Middle East closer toward a worldwide war.

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#### LIFE & STYLE

An attorney said Tuesday he is representing 120 accusers who have come forward with sexual misconduct allegations against Sean "Diddy" Combs, the hip-hop mogul who is awaiting trial on sex trafficking charges.

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# Local

## CNMI Humanities Month proclaimed

By RACQUEL H. FLOYD  
raxfloyd@gmail.com  
CORRESPONDENT

Recognizing the importance of the humanities, Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang proclaimed October as CNMI Humanities Month yesterday morning at the San Vicente Roundhouse.

Palacios said in his speech that the Commonwealth's society is diverse, encompass-

ing indigenous cultures and recent migrations from the Pacific and Asia.

Palacios recognized similarities and uniqueness in customs and cultures is a challenge for the humanities.

"That's why we have this progress to continue, perhaps set up a conversation on how we recognize those differences, and recognize the uniqueness of each of this customs

and cultures," he said.

Apatang then mentioned the importance of preserving cultural heritage for future generations and the need to maintain cultural traditions amidst diverse ethnic groups in the community.

He emphasized the importance of preserving cultural traditions and documenting cultural practices in books and records to pass them down to

future generations.

This year's theme "Weaving Cultural Narratives" highlights cultural differences within Indigenous and non-indigenous communities as discussed by Northern Marianas Humanities Council chair Gretchen Smith in her keynote address.

She encouraged everyone to explore the islands' interwoven cultural narratives

and uncover diverse stories and perspectives as well as recognize the profound connection between Pacific Islander culture and the ocean, which shapes their identity and oral history.

According to Smith, NMHC archive manager Roberto Santos introduced her to *mangāfa*, a vital principle, that honors the *kāhna* of the ancestors and underscores its relationship with land and waters.

"The ancient wisdom is experiencing a resurgence and it celebrates the deep bond between community and nature, celebrating the deep bond between community and nature, and emphasizing shared responsibility and collective identity as stewards of both the heritage and the world around us," added Smith.

Furthermore, Smith mentioned that Pacific Island traditions emphasize community individualism and personal achievement. She said blending these traditions with non-indigenous identities can create inclusive spaces for addressing global challenges.

"The humanities encourage reflection on values such as compassion and empathy, to guide actions."

Meanwhile, NMHC executive director Leo Pangelinan recognized *magalahi* (chief) and their commitment to promoting awareness of the importance of the humanities in his welcome remarks.

According to Pangelinan, the humanities covers academic subjects like literature, philosophy, history, languages, and the arts. NMHC utilizes these disciplines to understand community experiences and expressions. Their work aims to preserve and promote local cultures, languages, and traditions, fostering unity and identity within the community.

Pangelinan added that NMHC's projects promote critical thinking, ethics, and reflection for addressing complex life and community issues wherein collaboration and dialogue methods foster understanding and respect. He added the humanities also promote scholarship, studies, educational programs, and civic conversations that enhance cultural heritage and accessibility to ideas.

The site of the proclamation venue was also explained by Pangelinan.

"We choose this site for the

proclamation signing to highlight the importance of the roundhouse to our community. Historically, roundhouses were built in select villages on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota

as a platform for community meetings, including political campaigns and voting stations during the Trust Territory era," he explained.

Pangelinan added that the roundhouse held great significance for the village and its

people. Efforts were made to rebuild the iconic structure after its demolitions. He then expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to occupy the space and ensure its safety and maintenance.

The proclamation was read by Lymmia Macaranas in Chamorro, Que'ana Limes in Carolinian, and Kimberly Mendiola in English.

Mendiola said that NMHC strengthens humanities through community dialogue. The NMHC and the Office of the Governor will recognize outstanding contributions in the humanities wherein the awards will be given to individuals, donors, and partners who have supported the humanities over the past 33 years, and the event will take place within the month of October.

Mendiola encourages diverse communities to participate in cultural activities, support the NMHC as a platform for discussions, and celebrate the people of the Marianas and their cultural heritage.

Palacios and Apatang were also joined by House Speaker Edmund Villagomez (Ind-Saipan), floor leader Rep. Edwin K. Propst, Education Commissioner Dr. Lawrence Camacho, Commissioner Juan Pua of the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services, NMHC board members, and Rep. Denita Yangetmai (D-Saipan).

The closing remarks was done by NMHC program coordinator Leeani Saralu and the event was concluded with a group photo.

The upcoming events of NMHC for the month are the annual Sengebau Poetry Competition at American Memorial Park on Oct. 11, the Governor's Humanities Awards on Oct. 17, and the 1st Digital Preservation Lab on Oct. 19 from 10am to 3pm at the NMHC office in Springs Plaza, Gualo Rai.



Pangelinan

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# New researcher, evaluator at NMC-CREES' Food Science Program

As part of the Northern Marianas College-Cooperative Research, Extension, and Education Services' continuous efforts to expand its research and extension work, the college has brought on Dr. Md. Abdur Rashid Mia, whose expertise in biochemistry, molecular biology, and pharmaceutical technology brings a fresh perspective and is anticipated to contribute significantly to the program's development and to the development of the CNMI Green Growth Initiative's Regenerative Development Green Economy.

With a passion for natural medicinal plants, Mia is currently exploring the potential benefits of local resources for the CNMI community. Joining the NMC-CREES Food Science Program working alongside head food scientist and CNMI Program Leader Dr. Zaidul Sarker and their research team, their research focuses on investigating the bioactive compounds and medicinal properties of indigenous plants, particularly the noni, with the aim of developing innovative food products and medicinal supplements.

As the Food Science Program at CREES continues to grow, and with the unveiling of the new state-of-the-art food science laboratory on Saipan soon to be fully operational, Mia will be assisting Sarker in the publication of the noni research projects and any other current research projects. Their research into the noni plant's seeds, fruit, and leaves found that there are bioactive compounds present that exhibit strong antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and anti-diabetic properties.

"This could enhance the health and wellness of the CNMI community by promoting the local agricultural produce and medicinal plants to support green economic growth by fostering new opportunities for the commercialization of nutraceuticals from CNMI medicinal plants which are currently underutilized," Mia said.

The noni research project has been ongoing since the Food Science program secured two food science research grants totaling \$3.4 million in 2022. With the addition of Mia, the noni research project can begin its forthcoming publications about its benefits and potential to create a medicinal market in the CNMI.

"We look forward to Dr. Mia's contributions to science and to using the results of his research for the benefit of our island community. For an early career scientist, Dr. Mia has an impressive track record of research," stated NMC-CREES interim dean

Patricia Coleman.

Throughout the course of Mia's research, he hopes to discover better alternative anti-diabetic drugs from natural medicinal plants using environmentally friendly solvents and sustainable technology to overcome these problems. Diabetes is one of the most common metabolic diseases that continues to be a public health concern, with origins due to chronic and abnormal

carbohydrate, protein, and lipid metabolisms.

For media inquiries, please email [miguel.dandan@marianas.edu](mailto:miguel.dandan@marianas.edu)

Mia earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology from the University of Rajshahi in Bangladesh. He earned his doctoral degree in Pharmaceutical Technology from the International Islamic University Malaysia. Mia has

received several accolades for his research achievements including placing third place in a thesis presentation competition at the Faculty of Pharmacy, IIUM. Additionally, he has published over 20 scientific articles in peer-reviewed/indexed journals that examine the beneficial compounds, safety, and potential anti-diabetic and anti-cancer properties of medicinal plants. (PR)



Dr. Md. Abdur Rashid Mia of the NMC-CREES Food Science.

## Garapan Street Market today cancelled



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Garapan Street Market held its soft opening last Aug. 29.

The Garapan Street Market on Thursday, Oct. 3, 2024, is cancelled.

For more information, contact the Commonwealth Council for Arts & Culture at (670) 322-9982/3. (PR)



### COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION Office of the Executive Director



## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS CUC-RFP-24-033 WAREHOUSE SPACE LEASE FOR CUC SAIPAN

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from firms for the lease of warehouse space for CUC Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The proposed warehouse space must comply with DPW, OSHA and CNMI Zoning regulations.

The RFP Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$100.00 for one RFP package set followed by completion of registration with the CUC Procurement & Supply.

**One (1) original and five (5) hard copies** must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-RFP-24-033, Warehouse Space Lease for CUC Saipan"** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on October 10, 2024**. Proposals mailed via postal, or courier service must be received on or before the due date and time. Late submissions will not be considered.

Proposers are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This proposal and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Discussions may be conducted with responsible offerors who submit proposals determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from proposals submitted by competing proposers.

All Proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the Proposer due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements during Contractor's preparation of a proposal or supply under the contract. The RFP does not commit CUC to award a contract, pay any cost incurred in preparing the proposal under this request, or procure our contract for services.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on September 17, 2024** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email address [manny.sablan@cucgov.org](mailto:manny.sablan@cucgov.org) with a copy to Pepe Liwanag, CUC Warehouse Manager, via email at [pepe.liwanag@cucgov.org](mailto:pepe.liwanag@cucgov.org) and Marcela Tenorio, Senior Administrative Technician at [marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org](mailto:marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org).

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason and to waive any defects in said proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

KEVIN O. WATSON  
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN  
Purchasing Administrator



### Commonwealth Utilities Corporation Board of Directors



## PUBLIC NOTICE AGENDA

Pursuant to the Open Government Act (1 CMC §9901 et seq), the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation ("CUC") Board of Directors hereby informs the general public that the Board will hold a Special Board Meeting on Friday, October 4, 2024, at 9:30 AM. The meeting will be held in the CUC Conference Room, Room 17, 3rd Floor, Joeten Dandan Building. The following agenda will be considered, and public attendance is welcome.

### AGENDA

- I. Preliminary Matters
  - A. Call to Order
  - B. Roll Call
  - C. Reading of Notice Calling Special Meeting
  - D. Adoption of Agenda
- II. State of Emergency Declaration for Power Generation in Saipan and Rota
- III. Public Comments\*
- IV. Executive Session\*\*
- V. Announcement
- VI. Adjournment

/s/  
JANICE A. TENORIO  
CHAIRWOMAN

\* In accordance with Public Law 8-41, additional agenda items may be added to the above listing only by a recorded vote of the majority members of the governing body.  
\*\* All interested persons are welcome to attend and submit written and oral testimony on the above agenda items. Public Comments are limited to 30 minutes and each remark is limited to three minutes.  
\*\*\* Pursuant to 1 CMC §9912, the CUC Board of Directors may vote to meet at any time in executive session, to consult with the Legal Counsel on matters deemed privileged and confidential.



### NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery  
(CDBG-DR) Program

## JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

NMHC JVA No.	Positions:	Salary	Opening Date	Closing Date
2024-022	CDBG-DR Construction Inspector (1-Position) Re-Announcement	UNGRADED \$25,000.00 to \$28,875.00 Per annum	October 2, 2024	October 17, 2024 4:00 PM

Employment application form, detailed job description, qualification requirements and other information can be accessed at [www.nmhcgov.net](http://www.nmhcgov.net) and [www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com](http://www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com).

Applicants may submit their applications through the following options: Submission at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan; Drop Box located in front of the NMHC Central Office building; the CDBG-DR Office located on the 3rd Floor of the Ladera Building, Chalan Lulau, Beach Road; or email application and documents to [officemanager@nmhcgov.net](mailto:officemanager@nmhcgov.net).

All applicants must complete and submit the NMHC Employment Application Form together with required documents that are listed in the Employment Application Package. Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. NMHC and all its properties are drug-free zones; therefore, selected applicant will be subject to pre-employment drug screening.

It is the policy of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) that the merit system will be applied and administered according to the principle of equal opportunity for all citizens and nationals as defined by its personnel regulations and the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Constitution regardless of age, race, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, disability or place of origin.

For inquiries, please contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager, at (670) 234-6866/9447 or by email to [officemanager@nmhcgov.net](mailto:officemanager@nmhcgov.net). NMHC is a fair housing agency and an equal opportunity provider, lender and employer.

/s/ Zenie P. Mafnas  
Corporate Director



# CUC suspends employee increases

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**  
kimberly\_esmores@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

Due to financial constraints, the Commonwealth Utilities Corp., has decided to suspend performance-base increases for fiscal year 2025.

Last Friday, acting CUC executive director Betty Terlaje issued a memorandum to all CUC employees

informing them of the CUC board's decision to suspend performance base increases of 5% for FY25 due to budget constraints.

"This is to inform you that during the regular board meeting held on Sept. 26, 2024, the board of directors, after careful consideration, decided to suspend the 5% performance base increase due to ongoing financial

constraints. This suspension will take effect on Oct. 1, 2024, the beginning of fiscal year 2025, and will remain in place until further notice," she said.

Terlaje, in her memo, expressed that CUC's management is disheartened by the decision but it must be done for the financial stability of CUC.

"While the board and management

are disheartened to share this news, we fully understand the potential impact this may have on you and your colleagues. Our primary responsibility is to safeguard the financial health of the corporation, while also striving to maintain a positive and supportive work environment for all," she said.

Lastly, Terlaje expressed that she appreciates the hard work done by each and every CUC employee and assures them that alternative options are being explored.

"We appreciate the dedication and hard work that each of you bring to the corporation. Please know that the board of directors and management are actively exploring alternative options to address this matter. Thank you for your understanding and continued commitment to our shared success," she said.

A longer version of this story is available at [www.saipantribune.com](http://www.saipantribune.com)

## CHINA

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highlights the increasing tensions in the region.

"This situation emphasizes the urgent need for the federal government to implement robust security measures to protect our Commonwealth and its residents. Given these rising geopolitical challenges, it is crucial

for the federal government to take proactive steps in strengthening our security framework. This should encompass not only military assistance but also investments in local infrastructure and community resilience to better equip us against potential threats," he said.

By focusing on security in our region, Hunter said the U.S. can foster a safer environment conducive to economic stability and growth.

"It is vital that we champion these essential measures to safeguard our well-being in an increasingly complex geopolitical landscape. We must advocate for significant federal investments through grant funding and technical support to help our Commonwealth recover from the current economic downturn. Economic stability is key to national defense; without a strong economy, our capacity to protect our interests and ensure

security diminishes."

Specifically, Hunter said, the CNMI should request support from the U.S. Department of Defense to fund strategic initiatives that strengthen the local economy. By prioritizing investments in infrastructure development, tourism enhancement, and the creation of new industries, the islands can build a resilient economy capable of withstanding external pressures, he added.

"Federal investment will not only assist in our immediate recovery but also enhance our position within the broader geopolitical context, ensuring we remain prepared and secure. It is essential that we pursue these necessary resources and partnerships to establish a prosperous and stable Commonwealth for the future."

Senate floor leader Rep. Edwin K. Propst (D-Saipan) said China's missile test shows how vulnerable the CNMI is against external

threats.

"It's a harsh reminder and a warning sign as to how vulnerable we are in the Marianas when it comes to potential nuclear strikes. While Guam is going to benefit from a missile defense system, we must ensure the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands is also protected as well. Tinian has a divert airfield and is most certainly on China's radar. While we all pray for peace, we must also do all we can to safeguard our Marianas, just as we would our nation," he said.

John Oliver Gonzales, a senior policy staff under two gubernatorial administrations, said the missile test is posturing from PRC's leaders and hopes the U.S. can protect its citizens in the Marianas.

A longer version of this story is available at [www.saipantribune.com](http://www.saipantribune.com)

## MARIJUANA

From page 1

principal author of the bill, said the intent of the legislation really is just to be in line with Public Law 20-66, the Taulamwaar Sensible CNMI Cannabis Act of 2018.

Public Law 20-66 authorized the personal, medicinal, and commercial use of cannabis/marijuana.

Camacho said the pre-employment matter was not addressed in Public Law 20-66.

"Really the intent of this legislation is for the initial drug testing, anything after that is on the employee or the employer," he said.

Camacho said the legislation also addresses that any position that is federally funded, even partially, will be the exception to include positions that are safety sensitive.

He said it also authorizes the director of Office of Personnel Management to identify these positions.

The passage of P.L. 23-27 comes after Palacios announced his plans for a cannabis tourism industry reform.

Last month, Oscar M. Babauta

Sr., the governor's special assistant for Administration, issued a letter to all cannabis tourism industry stakeholders informing them of Palacios' plans to reform the cannabis tourism industry.

In addition, Babauta, said, Palacios intends to establish an industry of exporting cannabis and hemp products.

To head this initiative, Babauta added that Palacios has retained the services of Ambrose M. Bennett.

"Pro Services' Ambrose M. Bennett has been retained by the governor to lead his efforts to reform the cannabis tourism industry and try to create a hemp production and manufacturing industry for exporting hemp products," he said.

Babauta, in his letter, stated that the CNMI is in desperate need of a new revenue source and the cannabis industry was initially created to be a revenue source for the CNMI.

"As all of you are aware, the CNMI is in desperate need of new revenue sources and the purpose for creating the industries on paper by law was to generate new revenues. However, the government is presently spending over \$200,000 a year more on the industry than what is being collected

in taxes and fees from the cannabis tourism industry. We must fix this industry, or it was useless to create the industry," he said.

Babauta adds that there is also the fact that the CNMI is now in a "horse race" with Guam that now legalized recreational usage of cannabis.

"The governor has tasked me with working with Mr. Bennett and being the 'executive officer' for these reforms. It is critical that all stakeholders buy-in on the reforms that are driven by 'common sense and common practices related to the use of marijuana,'" he said.

In closing, Babauta asks that all stakeholders work with Bennett in creating the required reforms to make the cannabis tourism industry a productive revenue source for the CNMI government.

"To date, the cannabis tourism industry has yet to be promoted in any way and that must change if the CNMI is to reap real new revenues from the industry. You will be contacted in the near future by Mr. Bennett. It is the governor's sincere request that you work with Mr. Bennett on this confidential and time-sensitive matter," said Babauta.

## DYS

From page 1

Sablan added that the number of drug-related cases involving newborns has also increased from 24 cases in 2023 to 40 cases in 2024. While domestic violence cases rose from 25 in 2023 to 41 in 2024.

According to Sablan, a lot of reports are coming from the Department of Public Safety.

"After all the investigation is completed, it's forwarded to the agent's office. The heavy load is on us because that's where the case management services come in, a lot of monitoring...just to kind of paint a picture of the case management services that we have. So, from the moment we intervene, we're very much involved unlike DPS, they can come in and investigate them for the report then [submit them to] the agent's office. So, we deal with lives, so we can take it from the start with ongoing monetary [issues], and on that process, we carry out those to case management services," said Sablan.

The case workers assess families' parenting abilities and remove children from unsafe environments, according to DYS Child Protective Services acting supervisor for Mariah Barcinas.

Sablan also explained the procedure for infants being tested positive for meth.

"When we're notified, we want to make sure that we intervene right away because usually they're breastfed. So, the baby is positive, the mom is positive, so we want to make sure that we provide a safe placement. A lot of times, for immediate place-

ment, we have an emergency shelter while waiting to see if we can do a family placement. So, all these assessments are ongoing from the beginning," said Sablan.

She said an emergency shelter is provided while assessments are conducted to determine the best placement option, including family placement.

Barcinas also discussed the increased accessibility and affordability of methamphetamine, wherein now it only costs as low as \$20. She said individuals are obtaining it from family members and acquaintances. She said there are even cases where drugs were found hidden in M&M containers.

This is a testament to case workers being vigilant in detecting hidden drugs, she said.

Barcinas added that they work closely with the Attorney General's Office and the Family Court to address the root causes of child welfare issues.

Sablan also provided an overview of the federally funded Child Welfare Service wherein the organization operates a 24/7 emergency shelter for children removed from their homes.

She said DYS also runs a long-term foster care program and a juvenile probation program and the main prevention programs include youth centers and community centers.

Sablan said various departments and programs collaborate to support families, with a focus on long-term processes and court involvement.

"The data informs progress and identifies areas for growth, ensuring safety and well-being. Community support, including media partners, are essential in creating a safer environment," she said.

## LACK

From page 1

in with the FY25 budget act leaving them zero funding for operations.

"I'd like to bring to your attention that the operations account for the Legislative Bureau has been allocated no funding. This effectively leaves us with no available funds beyond those appropriated for personnel and utilities," Tenorio said.

"The lack of funding to the operations account will severely handicap the Legislative Bureau's ability to function effectively. Without sufficient funds to cover essential services, we will be unable to sustain the basic operations necessary to support our legislative work," Tenorio added.

Although personnel and utility costs are covered under the FY25 budget, Tenorio explains that funding for operations is needed to maintain facilities, access research and legal

tools, and more.

"While personnel and utility costs are covered, the inability to address these additional needs will hinder our capacity to maintain the facilities, access crucial research and legal tools, and support legislative activities like interisland travel and committee meetings. It's imperative that funds be allocated to this account to ensure that the Legislative Bureau can continue to fulfill its mandate without disruption," said Tenorio.

Breaking it down, Tenorio said operation expenses includes repair and maintenance, cleaning services, licenses and technology fees, communications, dues and subscriptions, and interisland travel.

Operations funds are needed for the upkeep air-conditioner and the newly installed generator and janitorial services like trash removal and yard maintenance to ensure the cleanliness and upkeep of facilities.

In addition, operation funds are

used to pay subscriptions to essential tools such as Westlaw (legal research platform), Microsoft Office Suite (Word, Excel), Adobe PDF for document management, membership fees for professional organizations such as the CNMI Bar Association (attorney dues), the Association of Pacific Island Legislatures (APIL), and the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL).

These funds also cover monthly service fees for Docomo Pacific (cable and cellular services), IT&E (internet, landlines, and cellular services), and costs associated with committees and delegation meetings on Tinian and Rota, including airfare, accommodation, per diems, and ground transportation.

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios signed into law the Appropriations and Budget Authority Act of 2025, also known as Public Law 23-26 last Monday.

The Legislature has yet to review the act.



# Minimum wages in A. Samoa increase by 40 cents per hour

**PAGO PAGO, American Samoa**—Workers on American Samoa employed in industries covered by the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007 will receive a 40-cent increase in their hourly wage beginning Sept. 30.

The Fair Labor Standards Act applies generally to employment in American Samoa as it does to employment in the U.S. The Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007, as amended by Public Law 114-61, sets industry-specific minimum wage rates for American Samoa and provides that

» **Pay raises for workers in various industries under Fair Minimum Wage Act effective Sept. 30**

additional increases in those minimum wage rates of \$0.40 per hour will occur every three years on Sept. 30, until all minimum wage rates

equal the federal minimum wage. The last increase was Sept. 30, 2021.

American Samoa's minimum wage rates are set for particular industries, not for an employee's particular occupation. The rates are minimum rates, but an employer may choose to pay an employee at a rate higher than the industry-specific rate. The law also requires employers to display a poster showing the new minimum wage rates where employees can readily see it.

The law also covers the minimum wage for government employees which, under the schedule of incremental 40-cent increases, will be \$6.01 per hour as of Sept. 30. However, the government of American Samoa previously established

Effective Monday, Sept. 30, 2024, the federal minimum wages in American Samoa by industry are as follows:

Industry	Wage	Industry	Wage
Bottling, Brewing & Dairy Products	\$6.29	Publishing	\$6.73
Construction	\$6.70	Retailing, Wholesaling & Warehousing	\$6.20
Finance and Insurance	\$7.09	Ship Maintenance	\$6.61
Fish Canning, Processing, Can Manufacturing	\$6.36	Government Employees Industry	\$6.01
Garment Manufacturing	\$5.78	Shipping & Transportation: Stevedoring, Lighterage, Maritime Activities	\$7.19
Hotel	\$6.10	Shipping & Transportation: Unloading of Fish	\$7.02
Petroleum Marketing	\$6.95	Shipping & Transportation: All other activities	\$6.98
Printing	\$6.60	Tour and Travel	\$6.58
Private Hospitals and Educational Institutions	\$6.43	Miscellaneous activities (includes domestic work)	\$5.80

an hourly minimum wage of \$7.25 for its employees.

For more information about the FLSA and other laws enforced by the Wage and Hour Division, contact the agency's toll-free helpline confidentially at 866-4US-WAGE (487-9243). Learn more about the division, including a search tool to use if you think you may be owed back wages collected by the division. The department protects workers regardless of immigration status and can communicate with workers in more than 200 languages. **(PR)**

## OIA announces \$80.4M in Compact of Free Association funds for Palau

**KOROR, Palau**—The U.S. Department of the Interior's assistant secretary for Insular and International Affairs Carmen G. Cantor announced \$80,400,000 in grant awards to the Republic of Palau for fiscal year 2025 as provided for under the Compact of Free Association Section 432 Review, Public Law 118-42. Cantor announced the award of funds while she was in Koror to join in the celebration of Palau's 30th anniversary of independence.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
Assistant Secretary for Insular and International Affairs Carmen G. Cantor

"The United States government congratulates Palau on the 30th anniversary of its independence and is honored to award these funds under the new 20-year Compact Review Agreement between our two countries," said Cantor. "We are proud of the strong relationship that we share with Palau."

The funding announcement includes \$50 million for the United States' second and final contribution to the Palau Compact Trust Fund as provided for under the Compact Section 432 Review signed in 2023. Economic assistance grants to support and strengthen the Republic of Palau's health and education systems total \$20,400,000 and, lastly, the amount of \$10,000,000 represents the second of six annual payments from the United States to support the reduction of Palau's public debt.

As negotiated between the United States and the Republic of Palau governments in

2023, the Compact Section 432 Review extended annual funding assistance for the Republic of Palau from FY 2024 to the end of FY 2043. More information about Compact and other funding provided to the Insular Areas may be found in the OIA Budget.

The assistant secretary for Insular and International Affairs and the Office of Insular Affairs carry out the secretary of the Interior's responsibilities for the U.S. territories of American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Additionally, OIA administers and oversees federal assistance under the Compacts of Free Association to the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau. OIA also administers a discretionary Technical Assistance Program for all the Insular Areas. **(PR)**

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# Opinion

Hafa Adai!

## Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER  
Volume XXXIV, Issue No. 198Published daily at 2/F JP Center,  
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### EDITORIAL

## A Ukraine cease-fire might do more harm than good

The details of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's "victory plan" haven't been made public. But Zelenskyy has been open about the premise: Only a strong Ukraine can force Russian President Vladimir Putin to the negotiating table.

He's right to an extent. So long as Putin believes he can outlast Western support for Ukraine, his war of attrition will continue. The question is how to change his calculation.

Any right-thinking person wants an end to the fighting. About a million people have so far been killed or wounded. The war has caused mass displacement and widespread destruction of property and infrastructure. It has created new geopolitical instability and shattered an economy that serves as a global supplier of essential commodities. The impulse to throw in the towel—to accept Putin's terms, stop the carnage and prevent further escalation—is understandable.

But is such an agreement even possible?

Putin has occasionally feigned interest in negotiations, but his price of admission—that Ukraine relinquish its claim to four regions he has illegally annexed, plus Crimea, and give up its hopes for NATO membership—betrays his insincerity. On the contrary, Russia's entire economy has been reoriented to support the war, it is still buying weapons and technology from rogue countries, and Putin's stated objective remains the same: Ukraine must be reduced to a Russian vassal.

As desirable as a cease-fire may be, then, it would entail enormous risks for Ukraine. For one thing, a pause would give Russia's military time to recruit replacements for the estimated 30,000 soldiers it is losing each month, plan a new mobilization effort, address operational shortcomings and replenish its weapons stocks. Putin would likely use such a truce to simply plan more attacks, as he has done repeatedly in the past—including after his previous invasion of Ukraine in 2014.

Compounding this risk, a pause could jeopardize international support for Ukraine, making it all the harder for it to defend itself against a revitalized Russia. Many Western allies are already looking for an excuse to divert funds from Ukraine to domestic needs; indeed, Germany is planning deep cuts in such aid in next year's budget. A cessation in fighting may offer plausible cover.

Putin has long bet that the West will tire of supporting Ukraine, that the Russian public will remain passive and that his military is funded well enough to keep up the fighting. A misguided cease-fire could make all these bets more likely to pay off—and leave both Ukraine and the West in a worse position when hostilities resume.

The goal for the U.S. and its allies, then, should be to ensure that Ukraine has maximal negotiating leverage before entering into talks.

As a start, the West must recognize that any meaningful reduction in funding now would not end the war — it

See UKRAINE on Page 7



## Putin's nuclear doctrine isn't his worst threat

President Vladimir Putin has outlined a much-trailed change to his nuclear doctrine, leading to predictable warnings of a radioactive Armageddon should the U.S. let Ukraine use American-made mid-range missiles against targets in Russia. That was, of course, his purpose.

The latest change of doctrine should be seen as an attempt by the Kremlin to restore credibility to nuclear threats that have begun to lose their power. It does nothing to remove the enormous hurdles to actually following through with a nuclear attack.

But Russia is sending out other, more plausible, escalation warnings that have gotten less attention. One, perhaps ironically, came via Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, when he said his intelligence services had discovered that Russia's military were planning to take Ukraine's remaining nuclear power plants offline by bombing them. This could happen.

Russia's pre-winter missile attacks on Ukraine's power grid have been successful, causing tens of thousands to flee their homes already, rather than try to survive a winter in unheated apartment blocks. There are few more politically potent actions Putin could take to shatter Europe's will to continue supporting Kyiv's war effort than to cause another wave of refugees to rival the millions who fled in 2022.

An attack on a nuclear power plant could hope to disconnect it from the grid without hitting a reactor and causing a second Chernobyl. Yet the profound recklessness of such a move would signal better than any doctrinal change Putin's willingness to entertain nuclear fallout, whether at a power plant or as a result of a nuclear strike.

Zelenskyy's claims aren't verified. He may have been playing to the global audience gathered in New York for the United Nations General Assembly. Or his intelligence agencies may have heard what the Kremlin wanted them to hear. Either way, the threat is plausible.

Another cause for concern comes from a Sept. 24 report from Reuters, noting that Russia has been discussing the provision of sophisticated anti-ship missiles to the Houthis militia in Yemen, where they control passage from the Red Sea to the Suez Canal. The Islamist group have been harassing—in some cases, sinking—commercial ships that pass through the strait since Israel's invasion of Gaza. Russian anti-ship missiles would vastly improve the Houthis strike range and power.

Putin threatened something like this in June, saying that if the U.S. and its allies were giving Ukraine longer-range missiles to strike Russia, he could reciprocate by supplying missiles to U.S. enemies around the globe. This threat, again, is plausible and would put both commercial shipping through the Suez and the naval vessels sent to protect them at significantly greater risk. Especially given its state of isolation due to sanctions, Russia has far less to lose from disruption of this global trade route.

These kinds of signals should be seen as weapons in and of themselves, which makes it vital to distinguish between what's real and feigned. In his brief, televised Sept. 25 remarks to a nuclear session of Russia's security council, Putin said two things of note. The first was that from now on, Russia will consider an attack on its territory by a non-nuclear state that's backed by a nuclear one as a joint effort. The second was that any conventional massed aerial assault on Russia would be sufficient cause for a nuclear response.

It's easy to conflate these points, reading them as a threat that

By MARC CHAMPION

Bloomberg Opinion

Marc Champion is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist covering Europe, Russia and the Middle East. He was previously Istanbul bureau chief for the Wall Street Journal.



if, say, Ukraine were to fire a British-made Storm Shadow cruise missile at an airfield or arms depot inside Russia, the new doctrine would allow for a nuclear strike on both Ukraine and Britain. Putin can of course do whatever he wants, but that isn't what he said. The second point about the threshold being a "massive" assault matters—one Storm Shadow is not that.

In fact, the doctrinal change is less important to the ongoing debate over whether Washington should lift restrictions on Ukraine's use of the ATACMS short-range ballistic missiles and Storm Shadows it's been given. The larger question is how the U.S. would respond if Russia were to break the nuclear taboo in pursuit of its war goals in Ukraine.

The U.S. has made it known that it probably wouldn't respond with some kind of nuclear tit-for-tat, avoiding the potential for rapid and catastrophic escalation. Instead, it has threatened a massive conventional intervention, in which it would inflict heavy damage on Russia's military capabilities.

But in a sense this misses the point. Russia's nuclear doctrine is a political document. It creates a framework for the operational procedures that control nuclear use and never see light of day. The public doctrine is designed to be vague enough that the commander-in-chief can take more or less any decision on nuclear use he deems necessary, while sending out signals of Russian intent.

The Kremlin has used this kind of nuclear signaling to impose an excess of caution on the pace and sophistication of military aid to Ukraine. This tactic has a long pedigree, dating back to a technique adopted by the Soviet military in the 1970s, called "reflexive control."

The goal, according to a paper written for the Dutch military in 2018, was to first understand and then influence the decision-making assumptions of an enemy, such that they end up making choices that are detrimental for them, but beneficial to Moscow. That involves reshaping narratives, so that once the other side sits down to decide how to act, it happens within a framework that was designed in Moscow.

Publishing distorted military doctrines was on a checklist of tools written for Russian commanders to achieve reflexive control, together with other ruses such as creating Potemkin military installations. One Soviet example cited was the parading of massive, fake, multiple warhead missiles on Red Square, followed by fake documents and conversations designed to be found or overheard by foreign spies, to create a backstory that made the fake more realistic.

Russia's nuclear threats have been tested as the U.S. and its European allies have crossed one imagined red line after another. Putin was never going to push his red button, but that doesn't mean he won't push others.



## BUILDING LIFELONG CONNECTIONS:

# The strength of compassion and community in the digital and physical classroom

As a teacher, I often caught up in lesson planning and evaluating student work, and I didn't take the time to appreciate the special moments I shared with them. However, in 2019, I decided to make a change and saw an opportunity to create something extraordinary with my students—a virtual diary of our experiences and memories that we could all cherish for years. So, I started a Google Site where I could document every moment, big and small, and make it a part of our shared history.

I recorded most of the details of our learning experiences on the website. It included the fun and interactive activities we participated in, the challenging assignments we accomplished together, the relationships we formed, and the memories we made. As I developed the website, I understood that it's more than just a record of our experiences; it's a platform to evaluate my teaching methods and recognize what is more effective for my students. Likewise, it allows my students to assess their learning and advancement by observing their progress and, most of all, acknowledging their achievements.

Then, the unexpected happened. A global pandemic struck before the end of the school year, upending the lives of millions of people around the world. Schools had to close due to

an unprecedented situation, and teachers and students had to adjust to new methods of learning and communication. But thanks to our virtual site, which became a lifeline, I realized the importance of the digital space I had created. It helped me keep in touch with my students; even when we couldn't meet in person, I always reminded myself of what we had together through that platform. Our simple Google site quickly became great memories for me and my students, providing a space to unite and support one another through life's trials and tribulations.

As we shared our experiences and supported one another through the struggles of remote learning, isolation, and uncertainty, I was struck by our depth of compassion and generosity.

Our shared stories and reflections revealed a newfound sense of connection and belonging that rose above our physical distance. We laughed, cried, and celebrated together, all while remaining firmly rooted in our shared humanity and the bonds of love and support that held us together.

But most of all, what made our virtual diary truly special were the people behind it. Our teachers, parents, and school administrators tirelessly devoted themselves to our students.

As we celebrate World Teachers' Day 2024, this year's theme

By **ROSEMARIE EMBILE**

Special to the Saipan Tribune

*Rosemarie Embile is a teacher at the Northern Marianas International School.*



is "Recognizing Teachers' Voices: A New Social Contract for Education"—reminds me of the lasting impact we, as teachers, have in shaping the future of education. The virtual diary I created with my students, once a tool for preserving memories, has become a way for teachers' voices to nurture growth, resilience, and creativity, even in the face of adversity.

As we continue to face the uncertainties of today's world, I am reminded of the valuable lessons I learned during that year. We must stay connected, focus on our goals, and remember what truly matters. When we do, we can create memories that will last a lifetime and forge bonds that will carry us through even the most challenging times.

Together, we have proven that even in the face of unimaginable challenges, we can find hope, resilience, and purpose by simply supporting and uplifting one another. And I know this shared experience will continue to unite and inspire us for years.

So, to all teachers and parents: keep doing what you're doing. Your voice and work matter, and together, we are working toward a better, more inclusive future for education.

# Harris' economic plan is a grab bag of targeted subsidies. Trump's is nonsense on stilts

The presidential campaign produced plenty of noise last week, but the race still appears mired in a virtual electoral-college tie.

Polls show Vice President Kamala Harris ahead of former President Donald Trump by about three points in the national popular vote, but that's not enough to guarantee a majority of the electoral votes she needs to win. President Joe Biden won the popular vote by about 4.5% in 2020 and barely squeaked through the electoral college. Hillary Clinton won the popular vote by about 2.1% in 2016 and lost.

So the outcome is in the hands of a few million undecided or potentially "movable" voters in a handful of swing states—and most of those voters say their top concern is the economy: which candidate seems more likely to bring about economic growth, higher incomes and lower prices (or, more realistically, a lower rate of inflation).

And that's why, as the race moves into its last five weeks, it's beginning to sound like a long debate over competing economic policy platforms—even if the two candidates can't agree to debate on the same stage.

From Harris, 'an a la carte menu'

Harris has been gradually revealing an economic plan that can be described as Biden 2.0, an updated list of priorities her boss fought for (although, in a speech unveiling the plan last week, she never mentioned his name). It's mostly a grab bag of targeted subsidies: for parents of small children, for first-time homebuyers, for small businesses, for manufacturing and technology. In an echo of her unmentioned boss, she summarized it as a plan to help families "to not just get by, but be able to get ahead.... When the middle class is strong, America is strong."

"I am a capitalist," she added, presumably to reassure moderate voters who have heard Trump caricature her as a "radical Marxist lunatic."

Reviews have been mixed. Republicans predictably dismissed the plan as warmed-over Bidenomics (although, with the economy growing smartly, "Bidenomics" may not have the sting it once did). Democrats praised it on the record, but some added—under cover of anonymity—that they weren't sure a clear overall message emerged from the list of targeted proposals.

"This feels like an a la carte menu," said one. "How many people are planning to start a small business next year?"

An undecided voter in Georgia echoed that critique in a focus group—before Harris' speech—organized by Republican Voters Against Trump (the people in the focus group were not members). "She's mentioned small business and babies, but... we need something for everyone," said the woman, identified only as "Jennifer."

Trump's magical thinking

Still, Harris' plan is head and shoulders above the grandiose but gaseous promises Trump has offered. The former president claims he will deliver faster growth, lower prices and massive tax cuts, but has offered no realistic blueprint for

how he'd get there.

"Prices will come down and come down dramatically and come down fast," he pledged last month. But when a reporter for the conservative Sinclair Broadcast Group asked how he would make prices drop, Trump's response was an untethered excursion into magical thinking.

"They come down with energy and they come down with interest rates," he said. "We're going to get energy [prices] down by 50% in 12 months. We're gonna have it. It's gonna be a major smash on energy."

That's not a plan, it's a pipe dream. A president has no power to make energy prices drop by 50%. Trump has promised to de-regulate the oil and gas industry and open more federal land to drilling; that's probably what he means by "major smash." But economists say it's unrealistic to expect those steps to produce major price drops in a global energy economy.

A president has no power to make interest rates go down either. Those rates are set by the Federal Reserve, which was designed to be independent from political pressure. Fed Chairman Jerome H. Powell is scheduled to be in his job at least until 2026, and he can't be fired over policy differences.

Trump has offered conflicting specifics about one piece of his economic vision: high tariffs on imports. He's mused about tariffs ranging from 10% or 20% (on imports from everywhere) to 60% (on China, sometimes other countries too) to 100% (on automobiles built in Mexico); the details seem to change depending on his mood.

Most economists say those are terrible ideas. Tariffs almost always produce higher prices for both imported and domestically made goods, fueling inflation. And most foreign countries hit by tariffs retaliate by slapping tariffs on U.S.-made goods, reducing American exports. But presidents have wide power to impose tariffs, so this may be one economic promise Trump can deliver.

Trump has also promised tax cuts to just about everybody, including corporations, Social Security recipients and anybody working overtime. He has never bothered to say how he would pay for the resulting cuts to federal revenue beyond his magical "major smash."

So who's winning?

Who's winning this asymmetrical debate? Like the overall campaign, it may be turning into a draw.

Trump started the campaign with a wide advantage over Biden in polls asking which candidate would be better at handling the economy, especially inflation.

But in recent weeks, Harris has chipped away at Trump's margin. A few surveys have suggested that she has erased it entirely, although those polls may be outliers.

Even getting close is an important achievement for the Harris campaign.

"The economy is traditionally an issue on which Republicans have the advantage," noted Doug Sosnik, a Democratic strategist

By **DOYLE MCMANUS**

Los Angeles Times

*Doyle McManus is a columnist for the Los Angeles Times.*



who helped President Clinton win reelection in 1996. "It's hard for Democrats to win it. But if you can't win an issue, you at least want to neutralize it—and she's done a pretty good job of that."

So maybe Harris' piling of one economic proposal atop another is paying off. Maybe Trump's incoherence on policy is finally catching up with him.

And maybe good economic news—a growing economy, easing inflation and lower interest rates—is finally seeping into voters' consciousness, allowing Harris to reap some political benefit from the soft landing Biden hoped would earn him a second term.

Whatever the reason, Harris has no choice but to keep grinding away on the issue.

"We have never won an election where we have been behind on the economy. We have to be at least even," veteran Democratic pollster Celinda Lake told the New Yorker last week. The remaining five weeks of Harris' campaign should be "a full court press to establish her economic credentials," she said.

Voters who are focused on abortion have already made up their minds. So have voters who are focused on immigration.

But voters who are focused on the economy and inflation are still in play. That's where the last remaining movable votes are. That's why the economic debate will be the last, and perhaps decisive, battle of this campaign.

## UKRAINE

From page 6






would embolden Putin. It should continue to bolster Ukraine's air-defense capacity, boost its supply of ammunition and other weapons, and remove most restrictions on the use of long-range missiles. Only a concerted effort of this kind is likely to change Putin's cost-benefit calculation.

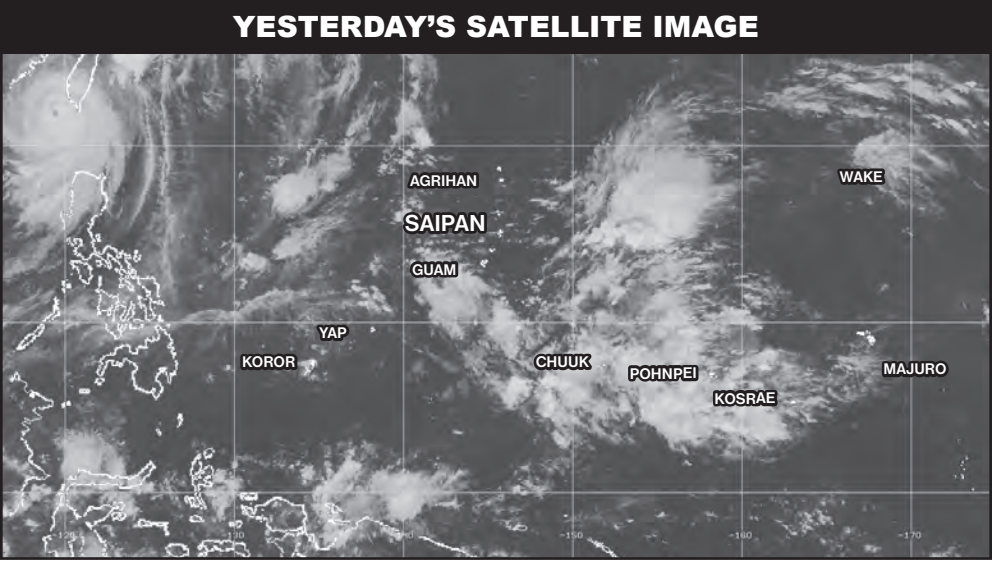
Next, the allies need to agree on a credible security guarantee for Ukraine. This is no easy task, and NATO is understandably reluctant to extend its overt protection to a nonmember state. Nuance and ambiguity may be called for. But a collective pledge—explicit or otherwise—to defend areas currently under Ukrainian control should be on the table to deter further aggression.

Throughout his bloody reign, Putin has always been willing to break truces, violate agreements and go back on his word whenever he perceives a strategic benefit to doing so. There's every reason to think he'd do the same this time around. Without proper precautions, a cease-fire wouldn't end the war, save lives or benefit everyday Ukrainians. It would do the opposite.

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# The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY		MONDAY	
									
Partly sunny with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms. East winds 10 to 15 mph.		Mostly cloudy with a 50 percent chance of showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms. East winds 10 to 15 mph.		Mostly cloudy with a 50 percent chance of showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms.		Mostly cloudy with a 50 percent chance of showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms.		Mostly cloudy. A 40 percent chance of showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms.	
87°	78°	87°	77°	87°	77°	87°	77°	87°	77°



PICTURE TIME: 5:40 AM WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2024

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Radar and satellite imagery shows isolated showers through out the Marianas. Isolated showers and thunderstorms today are expected to be sporadic, however showers may increase to scattered later this evening. To the east the expected trough is slowly moving towards the Marianas. Showers are anticipated to peak around Thursday night with numerous showers. Models suggest a monsoon trough will move in and keep the Marianas in an overall wet pattern through at least the beginning of next week. Combined seas are around 4 to 6 feet. Seas may increase by a foot or so around Friday. Winds are expected to be gentle to moderate and will gradually diminish over the weekend.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: <https://www.weather.gov/gum/>

MICRONESIA			▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Mostly Cloudy	90° / 81°	
Palau	Partly Cloudy	84° / 77°	
Yap	Partly Cloudy	85° / 79°	
Chuuk	Mostly Cloudy	87° / 80°	
Pohnpei	Mostly Cloudy	88° / 78°	
Kosrae	Mostly Cloudy	88° / 78°	
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	86° / 80°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:06 AM	6:04 PM
Friday	6:06 AM	6:04 PM
Saturday	6:07 AM	6:03 PM
Sunday	6:07 AM	6:02 PM
Monday	6:07 AM	6:01 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	6:13 AM	6:18 PM	-
Friday	6:59 AM	6:52 PM	-
Saturday	7:46 AM	7:28 PM	-
Sunday	8:36 AM	8:07 PM	-
Monday	9:28 AM	8:51 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Mostly Cloudy	61° / 55°	
Beijing	Fair	67° / 42°	
Hong Kong	Fair	91° / 76°	
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	87° / 76°	
London	Mostly Sunny	61° / 46°	
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	75° / 60°	
Manila	Fair	90° / 80°	
Melbourne	Mostly Sunny	75° / 55°	
Miami	Thunderstorms	84° / 78°	
New York	Clear	69° / 61°	
Osaka	Mostly Cloudy	88° / 74°	
Paris	Cloudy	65° / 54°	
Busan	Fair	82° / 60°	
Rome	Cloudy	73° / 59°	
Salem	Mostly Sunny	82° / 62°	
San Francisco	Sunny	67° / 52°	
Seoul	Sunny	68° / 48°	
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	90° / 72°	
Washington, DC	Cloudy	68° / 64°	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
1:58 AM	Low Tide	0.45	
7:55 AM	High Tide	1.77	
2:05 PM	Low Tide	0.60	
7:51 PM	High Tide	1.79	

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DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA076	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily	UA174	8:00AM	8:50AM	Daily
SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
UA824	11:50AM	2:25PM	1, 3, 5	UA825	5:30PM	10:00PM	2, 4, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily	UA184	10:25PM	4:15AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA193	6:55PM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Palau	UA192	10:25PM	6:15AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
UA183	7:20PM	9:10PM	Daily	PR110	10:30PM	4:25AM+1	Daily
				UA184	11:50PM	5:40AM+1	2, 5
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
7C3403/2305	4:45AM	10:20PM	Daily	UA192/174	10:25PM	8:50AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA076/183	9:50AM	9:10PM	Daily via Guam	UA184/174	10:25PM	8:50AM +1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via Guam
UA076/193	9:50AM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau	7C2306/3406	11:10PM	3:10PM+1	Daily
				UA184/174	11:50PM	8:50AM +1	2, 5 via Guam
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
TW308	3:15AM	7:00AM	1, 2, 3, 4, 5 Sep 2-8	7C3406	9:30AM	3:10PM	Daily
TW308	3:15AM	7:00AM	1, 6, 7 Sep 9-15	7C3472	11:00AM	4:40PM	Sep 15-18
TW308	3:15AM	7:00AM	Daily Sep 16-22	TW307	8:30PM	2:15AM+1	7 Sep 1
TW308	3:15AM	7:00AM	1, 7 Sep 23-29	TW307	8:30PM	2:15AM+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 7 Sep 2-8
7C3403	4:45AM	8:35AM	Daily	TW307	8:30PM	2:15AM+1	1, 5, 6, 7 Sep 9-15
7C3405	4:10PM	7:45PM	Daily	TW307	8:30PM	2:15AM+1	Daily Sep 16-22
7C3471	5:50PM	9:30PM	Sep 15-18	TW307	8:30PM	2:15AM+1	1, 7 Sep 23-29
SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)				HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN			
HX77	3:05AM	6:00AM	1, 5	HX76	6:25PM	1:35AM+1	4, 7

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.						
FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 2, 2024						
SAIPAN TO ROTA						
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	
1301	SAIPAN	ROTA	08:30	09:00	Daily	
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	10:30	11:00	Daily	
1303	SAIPAN	ROTA	15:30	16:00	Daily	
ROTA TO SAIPAN						
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	
3101	ROTA	SAIPAN	9:30	10:00	Daily	
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	11:30	12:00	Saturday & Sunday	
3103	ROTA	SAIPAN	13:30	14:00	Monday To Friday	
3104	ROTA	SAIPAN	16:30	17:00	Daily	
ROTA TO GUAM						
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	
3401	ROTA	GUAM	11:30	12:00	Monday To Friday	
GUAM TO ROTA						
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	
4301	GUAM	ROTA	12:30	13:00	Monday To Friday	
SAIPAN TO TINIAN						
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	
1201	SAIPAN	TINIAN	7:30	7:45	Daily	
1202	SAIPAN	TINIAN	8:00	8:15	Daily	
1203	SAIPAN	TINIAN	9:00	9:15	Daily	
1204	SAIPAN	TINIAN	10:00	10:15	Daily	
1206	SAIPAN	TINIAN	14:00	14:15	Daily	
1207	SAIPAN	TINIAN	15:00	15:15	Daily	
1208	SAIPAN	TINIAN	16:00	16:15	Daily	
1209	SAIPAN	TINIAN	17:00	17:15	Daily	
TINIAN TO SAIPAN						
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	
2101	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:00	8:15	Daily	
2102	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:30	8:45	Daily	
2103	TINIAN	SAIPAN	9:30	9:45	Daily	
2104	TINIAN	SAIPAN	10:30	10:45	Daily	
2106	TINIAN	SAIPAN	14:30	14:45	Daily	
2107	TINIAN	SAIPAN	15:30	15:45	Daily	
2108	TINIAN	SAIPAN	16:30	16:45	Daily	
2109	TINIAN	SAIPAN	17:30	17:45	Daily	



# JKPL names 2024 books for youth and adults

WASHINGTON, D.C.—An estimated 200,000 book lovers joined the Library of Congress National Book Festival in person on Aug. 24, 2024 at the Washington Convention Center. This year's festival theme "Books Build Us Up" celebrated the transformative power of books in all of us. Every year, the National Book Festival brings together best-selling authors, poets and illustrators with thousands of readers for book talks, panel discussions, book signings and other engaging activities from across the country and beyond to celebrate reading, literacy, authors, and community.

The Northern Marianas Center for the Book: Joeten-Kiyu Public Library stepped up at the Roadmap to Reading/Great Reads from Great Places floor by proudly displaying the official book selections for 2024, representing the Northern Mariana Island's local literary heritage. The titles chosen are:

**Children/Youth title:** *Hafa*

*Sinentete-mu?* by Adora Jay San Nicolas. Illustrated by Xander Creations. Written in Chamorro with English translation, edited by the Chamorro and Carolinian Language

Policy Commission and the Carolinian Affair's Office, and published by the Lady Diann Torres Foundation through the Language in Literacy Young Author's Program.

**Adult title:** *The Rope of Tradition: Reflections of a Saipan Carolinian* by Lino Olopai with Dr. Juliana Flinn, published by the Northern Marianas Humanities Council in collaboration with the Children of Our Homeland Project/Joeten-Kiyu Public Library

Dressed in Chamorro mestisa-wear with a tropical backdrop featuring our CNMI flag, a beach scene and an ancient Chamorro latte house, Team JKPL show-cased the warmth and hospitality of our islands at the National Book Festival. From sharing information about our local books, our islands, our people, our language, and our culture, Team JKPL was represented by library director Erlinda C. Naputi, technical services librarian Beth Demapan, library assistant I/employee of the year Caitlyn Crisostomo, library assistant I Kaleina Reyes, and administrative officer III Vincent Sablan. Thousands of visitors commented about how beautiful the people of the Northern Marianas were and expressed their interest in visiting the CNMI. Here are a few of the comments our

visitors shared:

■ "You are all amazing! You all look so beautiful!"

■ "I have to look into going to [Saipan]. Your island looks so beautiful!"

■ "I like your booth. It's very pretty. I like your outfits. You stand out!"

■ "Where is the NMI? I would love to visit! What is your language? Thank you for coming here!"

■ "I was gonna say, I love you guys!"

■ "I love your booth! I am a science teacher! You guys are all cheery!"

■ "Why didn't I know about you guys before? Have a good day!"

■ "Thank you for traveling here!"

■ "Thank you for coming all the way here!"

■ "I would love to visit the Marianas!"

■ "Safe travels back! Thank you for coming all the way here to visit!"

■ "You are all so pretty!"

■ "I loved learning about the Northern Marianas and the current literary scene."

■ "I love your attire, your people, and your display!"

■ "I have a lot of friends who are teachers. I love the Marianas!"

■ "It gladdens the heart to see you all here-represent!"

■ "Your booth is very beautiful! I love it!"

■ "Thank you. I appreciate you. Thank you!"

■ "I love how friendly you all are; how far you've traveled to get here; the unique books you have selected; and the beautiful attire you are wearing!"

■ "We will come visit your warm island one day!"

■ Thank you for flying here! Thank you! Thank you!"

■ "Thank you! Your cut-outs are great!"

■ "Your booth is so beautiful!"

■ "Thank you! I love the beautiful water you have!"

■ "My husband grew up on Saipan in the 1950s."

■ "Your group is really nice and approachable!"

■ "I want to live on your island! I love your backdrop!"

■ "You have the best decorated table!"

■ "I enjoyed the fact that the Marianas are represented."

■ "Great job!"

■ "I love your flowers (mwar mwar)! Thank you!"

■ "You all look so beautiful! This is the best booth by far!"

■ "This is such a pretty booth!"

■ "Nice to have you here!"



Team JKPL at the National Book Festival.

■ "You have one of the best booths!"

■ "Northern Marianas is the best booth! How cool are your islands!"

■ "I enjoyed learning about your books about the Northern Marianas culture and I support your people!"

■ "Your Northern Marianas group is amazing! We used to live in Hawaii! We love your booth!"

■ "You guys have the most decorative booth!"

■ "I am going to visit the Northern Mariana Islands!"

■ "I love your dress! I love the Northern Marianas!"

■ "I love how the U.S. Territories are represented here. It is amazing how you all traveled here!"

■ "Your stickers are so cute!"

■ "You all look so beautiful!"

■ "Thank you for being here!"

■ "This is the BEST booth!"

■ "It is so great that you are here! Thank you!"

■ "You have the MOST aesthetically pleasing booth!"

■ "We need the books in our U.S. libraries."

■ "I loved the energy and the colors of your booth!"

■ "I loved the friendly people."

■ "You have a beautiful island and your outfits are beautiful!"

■ "I enjoyed your kindness and your local attire."

■ "You are all so beautiful!"

■ "Beautiful Booth! I love your booth!"

■ "This booth is amazing! Thank you! You guys win!"

■ "This is the best booth!"

■ "I didn't know about the Northern Marianas! Thank you for sharing with me about your islands. Now, I know something new!"

■ "I love learning about the territories! The Northern Marianas is only 3 hours away from Japan!"

■ "I enjoyed seeing all your books!"

■ "My girlfriend wants to go to Japan. I would love to

go to the Northern Marianas. I want to go fishing. I talked to you guys last year! Thank you so much for coming here! Have a great day!"

■ "Northern Marianas is the nicest booths I have seen!"

■ "I feel as if I am in the tropics-at the Northern Marianas! I love your display!"

■ "You guys are beautiful! Where were you when I was little? Thank you!"

■ "Welcome to DC! It is great to see you all!"

"We are excited to participate in the National Book Festival's Roadmap to Reading," said Naputi. "It is a great honor to represent the Northern Marianas in our nation's capital. The National Book Festival is an excellent opportunity to celebrate the power of reading and connect with thousands of book lovers from all over the country. We are especially humbled that coming from such a remote island in the Pacific, we were able to make a difference and leave a lasting impression of the beauty and splendor of the Northern Marianas. We hope that our presence here encourages many to come visit our islands and learn more about our people, our language, our culture. Congratulations to our 2024 Book of the Year authors Lino Olopai and Adora Jay San Nicolas. Thank you to my hardworking team for your dedication and commitment to literacy."

During the 2024 National Book Festival at the Washington Convention Center, representatives from the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Northern Marianas staffed tables to promote their book selections and other literary works reflective of their unique locations. The area at the convention center where the 56 tables were assembled is called the Roadmap to Reading. This activity has been a part of the festival since 2002.

The National Book Festival is made possible by the generous support of private- and public-sector sponsors who share the library's commitment to reading and literacy,

led by National Book Festival co-chair David M. Rubenstein. Sponsors include: Institute of Museum and Library Services, The Washington Post, General Motors, James Madison Council, National Endowment for the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Humanities. To learn more about the National Book Festival, please visit <https://www.loc.gov/events/2024-national-book-festival/>.

The Library of Congress is the world's largest library, offering access to the creative record of the United States, and extensive materials from around the world, both on-site and online. It is the main research arm of the U.S. Congress and the home of the U.S. Copyright Office. Explore collections, reference services and other programs and plan a visit at [loc.gov](https://www.loc.gov); access the official site for U.S. federal legislative information at [congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov); and register creative works of authorship at [copyright.gov](https://www.copyright.gov).

All NMI Selections for the Center for the Book are available for check-out at the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library.

■ *Hafa Sinentete-mu?* by Adora Jay San Nicolas. (2024 Official Selection Children/Young Adult). Illustrated by Xander Creations. Written in Chamorro with English translation, edited by the Chamorro and Carolinian Language Policy Commission and the Carolinian Affair's Office, and published by the Lady Diann Torres Foundation through the Language in Literacy Young Author's Program. To purchase a copy of this book, please contact the Lady Diann Torres Foundation via email [ladydiantorresfoundation@gmail.com](mailto:ladydiantorresfoundation@gmail.com).

■ *The Rope of Tradition: Reflections of a Saipan Carolinian* by Lino Olopai with Dr. Juliana Flinn. (2024 Official Adult Selection) published by the Northern Marianas Humanities Council in collaboration with the Children of Our Homeland Project/Joeten-Kiyu Public Library. To purchase a copy of this book, please contact [info@nmhcouncil.org](mailto:info@nmhcouncil.org)

or call (670) 235-4785.

■ *Bweletaal Wischiirá, eew kkol Refaluwasch The Stick Dance, A Carolinian Tradition The Stick Dance, A Carolinian Tradition* by Jude Litulumar (2023 Official Selection Children/Young Adult). To purchase a copy of this book, please contact the Lady Diann Torres Foundation via email [ladydiantorresfoundation@gmail.com](mailto:ladydiantorresfoundation@gmail.com).

■ *Saipan: A Brief History* by Don Farrell (2023 Official Selection Adult). To purchase a copy of this book, contact [donfarrelltinian@gmail.com](mailto:donfarrelltinian@gmail.com) or the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library (670) 235-7318.

■ *I Duendis: The Duendis* by Cielo Long (2022 Official Selection Children). A story of a young girl named Rita who goes missing on Tinian and suffers the consequences of disobeying her mother. Written in Chamorro with English translation and published by the Lady Diann Torres Foundation's Language and Literacy Young Authors Program.

■ *Marmalade's Exciting Tail* (Book One of The Marmalade Series) by Katrina Manning (2022 Official Selection Young Adult) Manning's first book, *Marmalade's Exciting Tail*, is set in Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin. It is a modern story of Claire Young, a Web developer who recently broke up with her fiancé. Planning for a fresh start, she starts packing to move to another city for an intriguing job offer when her cat escapes and runs away. Claire cannot imagine losing her furry best friend, so she does the first thing that comes to mind-she asks her ex-fiance, Kirk, to assist her in the search.

■ *The Fundamental Issues Affecting the Northern Mariana Islands* by Jose S. Dela Cruz (2022 Official Selection Adult). The *Fundamental Issues Affecting the Northern Mariana Islands* discusses in greater detail the political arrangement between the United States and the Northern Marianas. It highlights and discusses some of the fundamental issues affecting the Northern Marianas as a self-governing commonwealth within the American political family. The first set of issues includes its geographical isolation, small land area, small population, lack of natural resources, and lack of capital required for economic development. The second set of issues relates to local self-governance and matters of qualification and competence of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands public officials, both elected and appointed. In order for the CNMI to succeed as a self-governing commonwealth, several fundamental matters have to be addressed and issues related to such matters have to be corrected by its leaders. (PR)



# Nation

## Walz, Vance go in depth on policy

**NEW YORK** (AP)—Tim Walz and JD Vance on Tuesday went after each other's running mates in a vice presidential debate that opened with a discussion of burgeoning domestic and international troubles—a hurricane that ravaged much of the southeast U.S. and growing fears

» **While attacking each other's running mates in VP debate**

of a regional Middle East war. Both Walz, the Democratic governor of Minnesota, and Vance, a Republican senator from Ohio, focused many of their largely cordial attack lines on the top of the ticket, as is traditional for VP debates. They each pointed to the crises of the day as reasons for voters to choose Vice President Kamala Harris or former President Donald Trump.

The debate unfolded in the final weeks of a campaign that has been defined by harsh, personal attacks and historic convulsions, including a candidate dropping out and two attempted assassinations. Polls have shown Harris and

Trump locked in a close contest as early voting begins across the country, giving added weight to anything that can sway voters on the margins, including the impression left by the vice presidential candidates.

The heated tone of the campaign was mostly replaced by deep policy discussions, with the candidates sometimes saying they agreed with each other—even as they outlined vastly different visions about the future of the country.

In one raw moment when Walz said his teenage son had witnessed a shooting at a community center, Vance expressed empathy.

"I'm sorry about that. Christ have mercy," Vance said.

"I appreciate that," Walz said.

The former president, who sought the spotlight himself Tuesday by posting live commentary online during the debate, was a central focus as both Walz and Vance

argued over whether Americans should return him to the Oval Office.

Walz depicted Trump as wrong on the issues and a chaotic leader. Vance rebuffed him with every answer and made the case for the man he once heavily criticized.

"What's fundamental here is that steady leadership is going to matter," said Walz, the Democratic governor of Minnesota, said in response to a question about the situation unfolding in the Middle East. "And the world saw it on that debate stage a few weeks ago, a nearly 80-year-old Donald Trump talking about crowd sizes is not what we need in this moment."

Vance, in his reply, argued that Trump is an intimidating figure whose presence on the international stage is its own deterrent.

"Gov. Walz can criticize Donald Trump's tweets, but effective smart diplomacy and peace through strength is how you bring stability back to a very broken world," he said.

# World

AS REGIONWIDE CONFLICT GROWS

## Iran fires at least 180 missiles into Israel

**JERUSALEM** (AP)—Iran launched at least 180 missiles into Israel on Tuesday, the latest in a series of escalating attacks in a yearslong conflict between Israel and Iran and its Arab allies that threatens to push the Middle East closer toward a regionwide war.

The orange glow of missiles streaked across Israel's night sky as air raid sirens sounded and residents scrambled into bomb shelters. Israel vowed retaliation for Iran's barrage, which it said had caused only a few injuries.

Before Iran's attack, Israel had landed a series of devastating blows in recent weeks against the leadership of Hezbollah in Lebanon. It then ratcheted up the pressure on the Iran-backed militant group—which has been firing rockets into Israel since the war in Gaza began—by

launching what it said is a limited ground incursion in southern Lebanon.

Israel has said it will continue to strike Hezbollah until it is safe for citizens displaced from homes near the Lebanon border to return. Hezbollah has vowed to keep firing rockets into Israel until there is a cease-fire in Gaza with Hamas, which is also supported by Iran.

Israeli military spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari said the country's air defenses intercepted many of the incoming Iranian missiles, though some landed in central and southern Israel. Israel's national rescue service said two people were lightly wounded by shrapnel. In the West Bank, Palestinian officials said a Palestinian man was killed by a missile that fell near the town of Jericho, though it wasn't clear where the attack originated.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed late Tuesday to retaliate against Iran, which he said "made a big mistake tonight

and it will pay for it."

Israel and Iran have fought a shadow war for years, but rarely have they come into direct conflict.

Israel considers Iran to be its greatest foe—citing Iran's repeated calls for Israel's destruction, its support for Arab militant groups and its nuclear program. Iran denies Israeli accusations that it is developing a nuclear weapon.

A high-ranking Iranian commander warned Iran would hit Israel's entire infrastructure if the Jewish state takes any action against its territory. Iran's armed forces joint chief of staff Gen. Mohammad Bagheri said the Revolutionary Guard was prepared defensively and offensively to repeat Tuesday's attack with "multiplied intensity."

Moments before Iran launched its missiles, a shooting attack in Tel Aviv left at least six people dead, police said, adding that the two suspects who had opened fire on a boulevard in the Jaffa neighborhood had also been killed.

## NATO's new chief makes Ukraine support a top priority and says he will work with any US president

**BRUSSELS** (AP)—The new head of NATO vowed on Tuesday to help shore up Western support for war-ravaged Ukraine and expressed confidence that he can work with whoever is elected president of the United States, the alliance's most powerful member, in November.

"There can be no lasting security in Europe without a strong, independent Ukraine," new NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte said in his first speech on taking office, and he affirmed a commitment made by the organization's leaders in 2008 that "Ukraine's rightful place is in NATO."

Russian President Vladimir Putin's forces are making advances in eastern Ukraine. Ukraine's army has a shaky hold on part of the Kursk region in Russia, which has provided a temporary morale boost, but as casualties mount it remains outmanned and outgunned.

"The cost of supporting Ukraine is far, far lower than the cost we would face if we allow Putin to get his way,"

Rutte told reporters, a few hours after his predecessor Jens Stoltenberg handed the reins to him, along with a Viking gavel with which to chair future meetings.

But Ukraine's NATO membership remains a distant prospect. Several member countries, led by the U.S. and Germany, believe that Ukraine should not join while it's fighting a war. Rutte declined to speculate about what must happen before it can stand among NATO's ranks.

Rutte did single out China, and particularly Beijing's support for Putin. "China has become a decisive enabler of Russia's war in Ukraine. China cannot continue to fuel the largest conflict in Europe since the Second World War without this impacting its interests and reputation," he said.

NATO's new top civilian official also underlined the importance of keeping the trans-Atlantic bond between the United States, Canada and Europe strong, with U.S. elections just a month away.

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# Life & Style

## Sean 'Diddy' Combs accused of sexual misconduct by 120 people, attorney says

**HOUSTON** (AP)—An attorney said Tuesday he is representing 120 accusers who have come forward with sexual misconduct allegations against Sean "Diddy" Combs, the hip-hop mogul who is awaiting trial on sex trafficking charges.

Houston attorney Tony Buzbee said he expects lawsuits to be filed within the next month, with most expected to be filed in New York and Los Angeles. Buzbee described the victims as 60 males and 60 females, and that 25 were minors at the time of the alleged misconduct. One individual alleged he was 9 years old when he was abused, Buzbee said. The allegations cover a period from 1991 to this year.

"This type of sexual assault, sexual abuse, sexual exploita-

Houston lawyer Tony Buzbee holds a news conference at his office announcing that he's representing 120 accusers who have come forward with sexual misconduct allegations against Sean "Diddy" Combs, the hip-hop mogul who is awaiting trial on sex trafficking charges, Tuesday, Oct. 1, 2024, in Houston.

tion should never happen in the United States or anywhere else. This should have never been allowed to go on for so long. This conduct has created a mass of individuals who are injured, scared and scarred," Buzbee said at a news conference.

Following the announcement of the accusations in Texas, an attorney for Combs said the performer "cannot address every meritless allegation in what has become a reckless media circus."



"That said, Mr. Combs emphatically and categorically denies as false and defamatory any claim that he sexually abused anyone, including minors," attorney Erica Wolff said in a statement. "He looks forward to proving his innocence and vindicating himself in court, where the truth will be established based on evi-

dence, not speculation."

Buzbee said more than 3,280 individuals contacted his firm and alleged they were victimized by Combs and that after vetting the allegations, his firm decided to represent 120 people. Other cases are still being reviewed. He said some of his clients have spoken with the FBI.

The individuals that Buzbee's firm is representing are from more than 25 states, with the majority from California, New York, Georgia and Florida.

The abuse that's being alleged took place mostly at parties held in New York, California and Florida where individuals were given drinks that were laced with drugs, Buzbee said.

Some of the alleged conduct took place at auditions where "many times, especially young people, people wanting

to break into the industry were coerced into this type of conduct in the promise of being made a star," Buzbee said.

Combs, 54, has been locked up at the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn since pleading not guilty Sept. 17 to federal charges that he used his "power and prestige" to induce female victims into drugged-up, elaborately produced sexual performances with male sex workers in events dubbed "Freak Offs."

## John Amos, patriarch on 'Good Times' and an Emmy nominee for the blockbuster 'Roots,' dies at 84

**LOS ANGELES** (AP)—John Amos, who starred as the family patriarch on the hit 1970s sitcom "Good Times" and earned an Emmy nomination for his role in the seminal 1977 miniseries "Roots," has died. He was 84.

He died Aug. 21 of natural causes in Los Angeles. Amos' publicist, Belinda Foster, confirmed the news of his death Tuesday.

He played James Evans Sr. on "Good Times," which featured one of television's first Black two-parent families. Produced by Norman Lear and co-created by actor Mike Evans,

who co-starred on "All in the Family" and "The Jeffersons," it ran from 1974-79 on CBS.

"That show was the closest depiction in reality to life as an African American family living in those circumstances as it could be," Amos told Time magazine in 2021.

Among Amos' film credits were "Let's Do It Again" with Bill Cosby and Sidney Poitier, "Coming to America"

with Eddie Murphy and its 2021 sequel, "Die Hard 2," "Madea's Witness Protection" and "Uncut Gems" with Adam Sandler. He was in Ice Cube and Dr. Dre's 1994 vid-

eo "Natural Born Killaz."

Amos' "Good Times" character, along with wife Florida, played by Esther Rolle, originated on another Lear show, "Maude." James Evans often worked two manual labor jobs to support his family that included three children, with Jimmie Walker becoming a breakout star as oldest son J.J.

Such was the show's impact that Alicia Keys, Rick Ross, the Wu-Tang Clan are among the musicians who name-checked Amos or his character in their lyrics.

"Many fans consider him their TV father," his son Kelly Christopher Amos said in a statement. "He lived a good

life. His legacy will live on in his outstanding works in television and film as an actor. My father loved working as an actor throughout his entire life. He was my dad, my best friend, and my hero."

The elder Amos and Rolle were eager to portray a positive image of a Black family, struggling against the odds in a public housing project in Chicago. But they grew frustrated at seeing Walker's character being made foolish and his role expanded.

"The fact is that Esther's criticism, and also that of John and others—some of it very pointed and personal—seriously damaged my appeal in the Black community," Walker wrote in his 2012 memoir "Dyn-O-Mite! Good Times, Bad Times, Our Times."

## Frank Fritz of the reality TV Show 'American Pickers' dies at 60

Frank Fritz, part of a two-man team who drove around the U.S. looking for antiques and collectibles to buy and resell on the reality show "American Pickers," has died.

He died Monday night at a hospice facility in Davenport, Iowa, said Annette Oberlander, a longtime friend. She said he was 60, not 58, as some websites and news sources said.

She said she was at Fritz's bedside, as was Mike Wolfe, who starred with Fritz for more than a decade on the History Channel program.

"The same off camera as he was on, Frank had a way of reaching the hearts of so many by just being himself," Wolfe said in an Instagram post mourning the loss of his friend.

In American Pickers, Fritz and Wolfe visited mainly small towns and rural areas in search of items. They often would crawl through dusty barns and crowded garages,

flashlight in hand to dig out items that they could resell at an antique shop in Iowa.

Fritz often was drawn to antique toys, and he would banter in a good-natured way with sellers as they sought to arrive at a price.

Occasionally they would stumble upon more notable finds, such as a dilapidated van in the woods of a small Massachusetts town that the band Aerosmith toured in before they started filling stadiums with tens of thousands of fans.

Oberlander said Fritz had a stroke in 2022 and never fully recovered. She said a celebration of life, which will include a motorcycle run, will likely happen in the spring.

"He was a fierce friend," Oberlander said. "He leaves behind an incredible amount of friendships because that's what was most important to him. A very large amount of friendships. Close friendships."



## Rowdy kids unwelcome at relative's wedding

**DEAR ABBY:** I recently attended a funeral for a family member. During the 90-minute service, my great-nieces and nephews (ages 3 to 6) were running around the church. Their parents said nothing and allowed them to continue.

Following the service, we were all invited to a sit-down meal in the banquet room of an upscale restaurant. Again, the children (ages 3 to 13) were allowed to run around, screaming and body-slaming each other on the dance floor in the center of the room. The noise became deafening with no regard to the older attendees. Again, the parents seemed oblivious to the noise and did nothing to stop them.

My son is being married in two months. Several of the children who attended the funeral will be in attendance at the wedding. How can I address the fact that I don't want the same performance from these kids at the wedding and reception? My husband and I are putting out a large sum of money for this event, and I don't want to leave early because of the deafening noise and embarrassment.

DREADING IT IN COLORADO

**DEAR DREADING IT:** I don't blame you for not wanting anyone, regardless of age, to detract from your son's

wedding. Now that you are aware of the young relatives' behavior and lack of discipline, you will have to deal with it directly. Inform the parents that this behavior will not be tolerated or welcome. When you receive pushback (and you will), all you have to do is point to what happened at the funeral and dinner afterward.

■ ■ ■

**DEAR ABBY:** I have recently come to realize that, even though she may not want to acknowledge it, my mother gave birth to me to replace my older brother, who was, for lack of a better way to put it, kidnapped by legal means back in the '80s using loopholes in the court system. Realizing this has made me understand why I always felt she resented me for not being him. I grew up in his shadow—something I know she did her absolute best to not let me see, but I was perceptive enough to sense it.

Should I confront my mother, who is so far in denial that it's extremely difficult living one state away from her because it's just too close, or must I accept that there is no closure on the matter when I'm not sure that it is even possible?

OVERSHADOWED IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

**DEAR OVERSHADOWED:** Regardless of how you ar-

## DEAR ABBY

BY ABIGAIL VAN BUREN  
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at [www.DearAbby.com](http://www.DearAbby.com) or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



rived at this epiphany, have you tried talking about it with your mother, who may have no idea this has been going on in your head? You won't know whether closure on the matter is possible until you level with her about your feelings and ask if she would be willing to discuss all of this with you and a licensed family therapist. I'm crossing my fingers in the hope she can help you put it to rest.

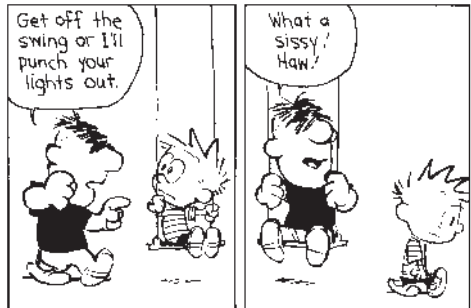
■ ■ ■

To order "How to Write Letters for All Occasions," send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby -- Letter Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)



Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes



By Bill Waterson

Garfield®



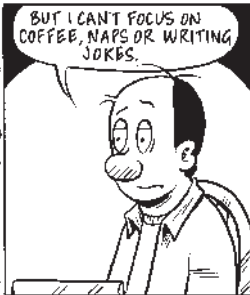
By Jim Davis



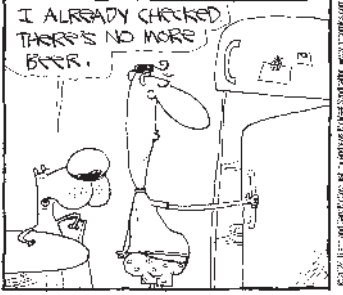
Adam@home



By Bryan Basset



The Duplex



By Glenn McCoy

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues and solutions. Includes 'Solution time: 24 mins.' and 'Yesterday's answer 10-3'.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Seann William Scott, 48; Neve Campbell, 51; Gwen Stefani, 55; Chubby Checker, 83. Happy Birthday: Take a fresh look at the past, present and future, and what you want to pursue next will become clear.

nipulative people. Pay attention to detail, look around and do your best. Own the spotlight instead of letting someone dim your aura. LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Physical activity will help you turn angst and frustration into self-awareness and achievement.

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Learn from past mistakes, observations and educational pursuits. Listen and dissect information carefully before implementing it into your plans. AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Invest time and effort in sorting through investments and how your money will bring the highest returns.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

Sudoku puzzle grid with numbers 1-9.

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once.

Yesterday's Answer

Grid showing yesterday's answer for the Conceptis Sudoku puzzle.

WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

List of words for the Wonderword puzzle: CANNED TUNA OPTIONS. Solution: 8 letters.

Appetizer, Arugula, Avocado, Bagel, Beans, Cake, Dip, Eggs, Garlic, Lemon, Lunch, Macaroni, Mayonnaise, Meatballs, Nachos, Niçoise, Onion, Pantry, Paprika, Pasta, Patty, Peppers, Pickle, Pizza, Pot Pie, Recipe, Rice, Risotto, Sandwich, Sauce, Sauté, Simple, Spaghetti, Spicy, Stir-fry, Stuffing, Tasty, Teriyaki, Tomato, Tostadas, Tuna Melt. Yesterday's Answer: Container.

STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

Difficulty: ★★★ 10/3 ©2012 Conceptis Puzzles, Dist. by King Features Syndicate, Inc.



# Mets continue wild ride with win over Brewers in playoff opener



**MILWAUKEE**

(AP)—Mark Vientos hit a tiebreaking, two-run single during a five-run outburst in the fifth inning as the indefatigable New York Mets continued their thrilling week by beating the Milwaukee Brewers 8-4 in an NL Wild Card Series opener Tuesday.

The Mets didn't earn a playoff berth until they rallied late from a three-run deficit to win the opening game of a makeup doubleheader in Atlanta on Monday, one day after the regular season was supposed to end.

Now they're a win from heading to Philadelphia for an NL Division Series.

"I knew we were in a good spot when we boarded the plane," manager Carlos Mendoza said. "We celebrated. We got out of the clubhouse in Atlanta, and you could tell right away our mentality was next day, next game."

Since Major League Baseball went to the current postseason format in 2022 that features four best-of-three Wild Card Series, the Game 1 winner has gone on to advance in each of the eight series. Only one of those eight series even made it to a winner-take-all third game.

Milwaukee has lost 10 of its last 11 playoff games, a stretch that began with its Game 7 home defeat against the Los Angeles Dodgers in the 2018 NL Championship Series.

Jesse Winker and pinch-hitter J.D. Martinez each drove in two runs for the Mets. Winker, who batted .199 with a .567 OPS for the Brewers last year before bouncing back this season, drew a chorus of boos each time he came to the plate. He also appeared to exchange words with Milwaukee shortstop Willy Adames after hitting a two-run triple in the second.

Brice Turang went 3 for 4, Jackson Chourio was 2 for 4 and William Contreras had two RBIs for the Brewers. According to MLB.com, the 20-year-old Chourio was the youngest player to get two hits in his playoff debut.

NL Central champion Milwaukee had been 5-0 against the Mets this season before losing 5-0 to them in its regular-season finale Sunday.

That sent the Mets to Atlanta needing one win in the doubleheader to reach the postseason, and they clinched a spot by scoring all their runs in the final two innings of an 8-7 victory over the rival Braves.

New York was back on the field in Milwaukee again just 22 hours after the twin bill—and the Mets showed a similar tenacity Tuesday.

"It's hard to be tired when you're playing playoff baseball," Vientos said. "I had a bunch of energy. I know all of us did. We were all excited, and we got the job done."

After the Brewers took an early lead with two runs in the first inning, the Mets answered by scoring three times in the second. Once the Brewers pulled back ahead with two runs in the fourth, the Mets quickly responded again, this time with five runs in the fifth.

Milwaukee had just taken a 4-3 lead heading into the fifth when man-



New York Mets' J.D. Martinez hits a two-run scoring single during the fifth inning of Game 2 of a National League wild card baseball game against the Milwaukee Brewers Tuesday, Oct. 1, 2024, in Milwaukee.

ager Pat Murphy removed Freddy Peralta, who had thrown 68 pitches and retired the last nine batters he faced, and turned to a relief corps that ranked second in the majors in bullpen ERA this season.

"It had been an emotional (68) pitches," Murphy said. "What's he got, 20 left? He's usually between 83 and 90, is when he kind of loses a little bit on his fastball. I didn't want (him) to face those guys three times around."

The move backfired.

## PADRES 4, BRAVES 0

**SAN DIEGO** (AP)—Fernando Tatis Jr. hit a towering two-run homer on his first playoff swing in four years and Michael King struck out 12 in his first postseason start as the San Diego Padres beat rookie AJ Smith-Shawver and the Atlanta Braves 4-0 in Game 1 of their NL Wild Card Series on Tuesday night.

Tatis' 415-foot shot in the first inning landed in the second deck in left field at Petco Park and sent the towel-waving, sellout crowd of 47,647 into a frenzy. The 25-year-old star, who missed just more than 2 1/2 months this season with a stress reaction in his right thighbone, watched the ball fly away, tossed his bat aside, gestured toward the home dugout and did his signature stutter step around third base.

"It's beautiful energy. I love this type of situation," Tatis said. "It definitely brings the best out of me. And just looking forward to way more experiences like this."

He said he was hunting a fastball.

"I was going for it probably before he released the pitch. But looking for my fastball, he left it over the plate, and had definitely great results," Tatis said. "I knew it was going to go out. I didn't know it was going to land in the second deck just because how high it was."

Game 2 in the best-of-three playoff is Wednesday night. If the Padres

win the series, they'll face their biggest rivals, the NL West champion Los Angeles Dodgers, in the National League Division Series. The Padres eliminated the 111-win Dodgers in a 2022 NLDS.

King was brilliant in becoming the first pitcher to have 12 strikeouts with no runs or walks allowed in his first career postseason start. He permitted five hits and joined Kevin Brown and Sterling Hitchcock as the only Padres pitchers with double-digit strikeouts in a playoff game.

At 2 hours, 9 minutes, it was the fastest postseason game since Greg Maddux and the Braves beat the Dodgers in 2:08 during a 1996 NL Division Series.

"I think I dreamed of a perfect game instead of a few hits that I gave up," said King, who came over in the blockbuster trade that sent Juan Soto to the New York Yankees in December. "But I mean, to get up 1-0 in a three-game series is huge. That was the goal and we accomplished that. We've got our horse Joe (Musgrove) tomorrow and I've got a lot of confidence in us."

King made his postseason debut with the Yankees in the AL playoff bubble in 2020 at eerily empty Petco Park, where the only "fans" were a few thousand cardboard cutouts. He pitched two innings in a Game 3 loss during a Division Series that Tampa Bay won in five games.

Getting the quick 2-0 lead "made it so I could really attack on my fastball and stay ahead in the counts and really put the pressure on," King said. "Feeling the crowd noise, knowing how big postseason games are, it all played into my mentality throughout the whole game."

The Braves clinched a playoff berth by winning the second game of a makeup doubleheader against the New York Mets on Monday in Atlanta. But they are without NL Cy Young Award favorite Chris Sale for this series. The left-hander was

scratched from the late game Monday with back spasms.

Atlanta played 27 innings on opposite coasts in a little more than 24 hours.

## ROYALS 1, ORIOLES 0

**BALTIMORE** (AP)—As Bobby Witt Jr. prepared to make his much-anticipated playoff debut for the Kansas City Royals, he took a moment after the final notes of the national anthem rang out at Camden Yards on Tuesday to soak it all in.

The bright lights on a cloudy afternoon. The 41,506 roaring souls in the stands, most supporting the host Baltimore Orioles. The orange towels twirling in their hands.

"I'm like, 'This is where you want to be,'" Witt said afterward. "This is the spot you want to be in. And this is what makes you a baseball player. This is what you dream of."

Witt showed why he is one of the game's biggest young stars, bringing home the only run with a single Tuesday to back six terrific innings from another playoff first-timer, Cole Ragans, and helping the Royals return from a nine-year postseason absence with a 1-0 victory over the Orioles in Game 1 of their AL Wild Card Series.

"It's kind of fitting for him to drive in the run. He's been the leader of the offense — him and (Salvador Perez) — all year," KC's Michael Massey said. "Having him up in that situation is what we want as a team."

Witt, the 24-year-old shortstop who led the majors with 211 hits and a .332 batting average this season, bounced the ball through the infield off a 95 mph, first-pitch cutter from 2021 NL Cy Young Award winner Corbin Burnes with two outs in the sixth.

Burnes used that cutter to get Witt out in his first two at-bats.

"He took some pretty bad swings on it, weak contact, so it was a pretty good pitch," Burnes said. "He didn't

hit it very hard. It just found a hole, and that was the difference."

Maikel Garcia came around to score after drawing a walk, stealing second—Burnes allowed runners to swipe a major league-high 41 bases this season—and moving to third on a groundout.

Garcia is another postseason rookie, as is Lucas Erceg, who earned a four-out save, emblematic of an up-and-coming Royals club that lost 106 games last season but used a 30-win improvement to get back to October for the first time since winning the 2015 World Series.

## TIGERS 3, ASTROS 1

**HOUSTON** (AP)—Tarik Skubal kept up his stellar season with a sensational playoff debut and the Detroit Tigers got to Framer Valdez early in a 3-1 win over the Houston Astros in their AL Wild Card Series opener on Tuesday.

The Tigers, swept in the American League Division Series in their last trip to the playoffs in 2014, got their first postseason win since Game 4 the 2013 AL Championship Series against Boston.

Down 3-0 entering the ninth, Houston scored on Yanier Diaz's RBI single and had the bases loaded when Jason Heyward hit a game-ending lineout against Beau Brieske.

Game 2 of the best-of-three series is Wednesday in Houston.

Skubal, the AL pitching Triple Crown winner, allowed just four singles and walked one in six innings. About the only hard hit by the Astros off him was one that hit him—the left was struck on his right wrist by Diaz's second-inning comebacker.

"It was a good challenge," Skubal said. "It was fun. It was a ton of fun. I enjoyed it. It's probably the most nervous I've been since my debut. That was also fun to deal with. What a game. It was fun, glad to come out with a win."

Yordan Alvarez, playing for the first time since spraining his right knee Sept. 22, doubled off Jason Foley starting the ninth inning. Pinch-runner Zach Dezenzo and moved to third on Alex Bregman's infield single and Diaz singled on a grounder to right.

Jeremy Peña sacrificed, Brieske relieved and Victor Caratini flied out to short left. Chas McCormick and Brieske retired Heyward for the save.

"Skubal has been really good all year," Espada said. "We had a few chances there in the middle of the game, and we couldn't capitalize. But credit to him. He made pitches. And we battled until the end. We had a shot there in the ninth, and we just couldn't get a big hit."

The AL West champions were hurt by yet another playoff flop from Valdez, who went 0-3 in the postseason last year. Houston's ace ranked third in the AL with a 2.91 ERA in the regular season but permitted three runs and seven hits in just 4 1/3 innings Tuesday.

Detroit pounced on him in the second. Wenceel Pérez singled with one out before, Spencer Torkelson walked and



# Butler arrival delayed, Herro has a new look as Heat gather for media day



MIAMI (AP)—Tyler Herro had a new haircut for media day. Jimmy Butler's hairstyle was, to the disappointment of some, normal.

And with that, the Miami Heat season started in predictably unpredictable fashion.

Butler was not at the start of Heat media day on Monday morning, after his flight back from Paris was delayed — travel issues—and he didn't arrive in South Florida until early afternoon, a few hours behind schedule. Everyone else was there for the start of the season, including Herro, who sported a new, simple buzzcut to start the year and said he's keeping it all season.

"It's all business," Herro said.

Media day is the annual prelude to the start of training camp and Butler made a splash last year by showing up basically in costume—new hairdo, some facial piercings and a look that went viral immediately. It was his "Emo Jimmy" phase, he said. And he did something similar in 2022, going through media day with dreadlocks in another switch from his usual look.

This year, Jimmy was just Jimmy. Social media was wondering what he'd come up with this year, and perhaps to the chagrin of those posters, he kept things simple.

"I'm here. Normal hair," Butler said. "No shenanigans. ... I've been running around trying to make it back here. I'm just happy that I'm here."

Butler is expected to be with the team for its first practice on Tuesday when training camp opens in the Bahamas. Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said But-



Miami Heat forward Duncan Robinson, right, takes a selfie for a fan in the stands, as he stands on the sideline before the start of an MLS soccer match between Inter Miami and Charlotte FC, Saturday, Sept. 28, 2024, in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

ler is "in a good place coming into camp and he's prepared himself for this camp."

"He's at a point now where he needs me to really coach this team at a high level," Spoelstra said. "He needs me to coach him at a high level, push him to higher levels and I need him to be at his highest level as a player, as a leader and the same goes for everybody else."

Butler was in Los Angeles

last week for the premiere of the Netflix docuseries "Starting 5," which followed him and four other NBA stars—the Los Angeles Lakers' LeBron James, Boston's Jayson Tatum, Minnesota's Anthony Edwards and Sacramento's Domantas Sabonis—throughout last season. From there, he went to Paris and was seen at Fashion Week events along with a Paris Saint-Germain soccer match on Friday night.

Butler makes no secret of his PSG fandom.

This also is no secret: The Heat haven't been thrilled by how many games Butler has missed in recent years. He was eligible for an extension this summer that could have netted him up to \$113 million for the 2025-26 and 2026-27 seasons, but no deal was put together. Butler could leave after this season as a free agent if he chooses, or a

new deal in Miami could be struck in the interim.

The 35-year-old Butler has missed 100 regular season games in his five Miami seasons, sitting out for injuries, rest or other reasons nearly 26% of the time. He suffered a knee injury during the play-in tournament last season and missed Miami's five-game Round 1 playoff loss to eventual champion Boston.

Heat President Pat Riley

said last spring the team was facing "a big decision" on offering Butler any extension, particularly one that would have cost the team more than \$55 million a year.

"That's a big decision on our part to commit those kinds of resources unless you have somebody who's going to be there and available every single night," Riley said after last season. "That's the truth."

Butler didn't seem bothered by the lack of an extended deal.

"I guess I've got to go and hoop," Butler said. "I've got to prove that I am a major part of winning and rightfully so. I've done it before. This is no different. ... That will take care of itself."

Spoelstra gave no indication that Monday's delayed arrival was troublesome. It's obvious that Butler will start, alongside captain Bam Adebayo, and Spoelstra strongly suggested that point guard Terry Rozier (who is full-go for camp after his 2023-24 season ended early because of a neck injury) and Herro also are entering the year with starting spots.

Herro has been a Sixth Man of the Year and has said in the past he wants to be a starter. This year, with the new haircut, he had a new approach: He said he'll take whatever role Miami wants him to have.

"Honestly, I'm just going to leave it to Spo and Pat. Whatever they say I am, that's what I am," Herro said. "I'm a starter, I'm off the bench, we're going to let the best coach in the league decide, we're going to let one of the best GMs or presidents ever to do it decide if I'm starting or coming off the bench. I'm willing to do whatever it takes to win a championship."

## Media Day in the NBA: Optimism abounds, and new faces settle into new homes

Klay Thompson walked through the Dallas Mavericks' facility in his new uniform for the first time. Chris Paul posed side-by-side with Victor Wembanyama in San Antonio, one standing about a foot and a half taller than the other. And LeBron James and Bronny James officially headed to work together in Los Angeles as the NBA's first father-and-son teammates.

Basketball is back.

Monday was Media Day for 28 of the 30 NBA teams, featuring new faces—Paul, Thompson, Paul George in Philadelphia among them—in new places and tons of optimism everywhere before training camps truly begin for those clubs on Tuesday. The exceptions are Boston and Denver; they got to start camp last week because they'll be heading to

the United Arab Emirates for preseason games this week.

"It's the NBA. Everyone starts 0-0 at the beginning of the year," said another of those new faces in new places, guard Alex Caruso of the Oklahoma City Thunder. "And everyone thinks that they could win a championship or reach the playoffs, whatever it is, that big trophy for that team at the end of the year. You have to show up and play the games."

Media day might be the happiest, most lighthearted day of the NBA year. Players make silly poses for the camera, sometimes commandeer the cameras themselves, do a ton of interviews and generally seem to be enjoying themselves.

The hard work starts Tuesday. About half the teams in the league will

be holding at least some of their training camp on the road—for example, Miami and Philadelphia are going to the Bahamas, while Golden State and the Los Angeles Clippers are off to Hawaii—in an effort to bond and limit distractions.

"We've got a lot of new faces and a lot of guys trying to take next steps in their careers and it is going to be fun from Day 1 tomorrow when we hit the court and start getting our reps in," said Stephen Curry, the Golden State star guard and now Olympic gold medalist as well. "We say it all the time in training camp. It is a way of thinking if you want to be great in this league, but it is true for us more than ever. Every day does matter for us to be able to figure this thing out."

For the Warriors, they're

figuring out life without Thompson. There's a flip side of that coin: The Mavericks, who went to the NBA Finals last season, now get to figure out what life will be like with the veteran sharpshooter.

"I'm excited that he decided to come here, that he decided to commit to us for the next few years," Dallas guard Kyrie Irving said of Thompson. "And I feel like our dreams can be possible because he's here now and he's added some great value to our championship aspirations."

The 76ers feel the same about George, who comes to Philly to pair up with Joel Embiid and Tyrese Maxey after being part of the Clippers.

"I think we're kind of right in the middle of where you need to be to compete for a championship," George said.

And even though they

couldn't talk about it—the trade wasn't official during their media day events Monday — the New York Knicks surely feel the same about Karl-Anthony Towns, who is on the move after a surprise trade from Minnesota.

"KAT's an amazing player," the Knicks' Josh Hart said, which is about all that anyone from New York could say because the trade was still pending.

In San Antonio, the 6-foot Paul posed next to the 7-foot-4—or more—Wembanyama. Paul barely reached the shoulder of the reigning rookie of the year. Paul was brought in to help lead a team that the Spurs hope is on the rise, after years of being someone tough for the team to deal with in opposing uniforms.

"I have despised Chris for many years," Spurs coach

Gregg Popovich said.

"It's mutual," Paul said.

They're happy to be together and joined at the hip now, of course. Also back at work now: The U.S. Olympic men's basketball team, which beat France in Paris for a fifth consecutive gold medal. Curry was part of that team, as was James, who remains the oldest player in the league—he turns 40 in December—and now has son Bronny playing alongside him in L.A.

He doesn't feel old, though. Winning gold again made James feel reborn, and said his Olympic run reminded him what's possible.

"I do have a lot in the tank," James said. "A lot. I can help be a big part of a team win the ultimate, whether it's gold or the Larry O'Brien Trophy or whatever the case may be. I can still get it done." (AP)



# A March 2025 marathon trio: Japan, Saipan, Seoul



Marathoners looking for an ideal time to race in Asia-Pacific need look no further than the Tokyo Marathon, Saipan Marathon, and Seoul Marathon on back-to-back weekends in early March 2025.

All three marathons are certified measured courses by World Athletics in cooperation with AIMS (Association of International Marathons and Distance Races), beginning with the Tokyo Marathon on March 2, Saipan Marathon on March 8, and Seoul Marathon on March 16.

The capital island of the Marianas—is a 3-hour direct flight from Tokyo and 4-hour direct flight to Seoul, making it a convenient segue for marathoners. The 17th Annual Saipan Marathon is an annual signature event of the Marianas Visitors Authority.

“The Saipan Marathon is one of the most scenic courses in the western Pacific, and the Marianas are the perfect tropical respite from the hustle and



MVA

Mountain views, ocean vistas, and quiet roadways welcome runners in the Skechers Saipan Marathon 2024 in the Marianas. Registration is now open with early bird rates at [www.raceroster.com](http://www.raceroster.com) for Saipan Marathon 2025 on March 8 on the weekend between Tokyo Marathon and Seoul Marathon.

bustle of city life,” said MVA managing director Christopher A. Concepcion. “Our natural beauty is what draws most visitors, and Saipan Marathon follows some of the island’s most scenic roadways, providing stunning views of our tranquil lagoon and lush mountains. It makes a perfect sandwich of marathon weekends in between Tokyo Marathon and Seoul Marathon, and we warmly welcome all run-

ners looking to experience our unique Marianas landscape and culture.”

The Marianas is an archipelago of 14 islands—including Saipan, Tinian, and Rota—in the Western Pacific. The Marianas are home to indigenous Chamorro and Carolinian people, as well as over 20 different ethnicities from around the world who live and work in a harmonious tropical paradise.



MVA

Petlas Marianas performs indigenous Chamorro and Carolinian dances at the awards banquet of the Skechers Saipan Marathon 2024 in the Marianas. Registration is now open at [www.raceroster.com](http://www.raceroster.com) for the 17th Annual Saipan Marathon on March 8, 2025, on the weekend between Tokyo Marathon and Seoul Marathon.

Ancient latte stone limestone monoliths, traditional nature-based ocean navigation not reliant on modern technology, and a culture seasoned by East and West influences are just a few of the experiences found in the Marianas.

Registration for Saipan Marathon is open at [https://raceroster.com/events/2025/92790/saipan-](https://raceroster.com/events/2025/92790/saipan-marathon-2025)

marathon-2025. Early bird registration through Oct. 31, 2024, is \$80 for the full marathon, \$60 for the half marathon, and \$50 for the 10K and 5K. For CNMI residents and U.S. military, the early bird rate is \$60 for the full marathon, \$50 for the half marathon, and \$40 for the 10K and 5K. With valid photo ID, youth ages 18 or younger on March

5, 2025, may register for 10K or 5K for \$35 through Oct. 31, 2024. However, full marathon participants must be age 16 or older. Half marathon participants must be age 14 or older.

Cash prizes will be awarded for top finishers and by age division. Participants will receive a limited edition official Saipan Marathon T-shirt, official Saipan Marathon medal, certificate of completion and one entry to the awards banquet, also on March 8.

Fees increase incrementally beginning on Nov. 1, 2024, and again on Feb. 1, 2025. The deadline to register is 5pm ChST on March 5, 2025.

The event is co-organized by the MVA with Northern Marianas Athletics and is sanctioned under the Northern Marianas Athletics rules and regulations. In March 2024 the race hosted over 500 registrants from nine countries.

For more information, visit <https://raceroster.com> or [www.mymarianas.com](http://www.mymarianas.com) or contact MVA Community Projects coordinator Ed Diaz at (670) 664-3210 or [communityprojects@mymarianas.com](mailto:communityprojects@mymarianas.com). (PR)

## DEBACLE

From page 16

skills his kids learn in jiu jitsu go beyond self-defense. They know life lessons, including discipline, humility, friendship, and teamwork—qualities that extend beyond the mat.

When teaching students with different skill levels, Alvarez takes a foundational approach. “Everyone is different,” he said, adding that jiu-jitsu is a universal language. “As long as we teach them the basics and build a good foundation, they can go on to become better jiu-jitsu players.”

The impact of Alvarez’s teachings is best illustrated in the young students who have embraced jiu-jitsu under his guidance. Students like Justin Ma, Trey and Tate Manglona, and Mica and Amelia Zevallos share how Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu has influenced their lives.

Ma, a 17-year-old Marianas High School student, said she got her start in BJJ when a rela-

tive introduced her to the sport.

“I was 16 years old when I got introduced to BJJ. At first, I was hesitant to join, but my auntie was the one who introduced the gym, Trench Tech, to me and brought me there. When she stopped BJJ, I continued my journey because I loved the sport, and it made me happy. When I do BJJ, it clears my mind, and I don’t think about all the other things. BJJ taught me how to focus on schoolwork and life in general. Before, I couldn’t focus on one thing, and I kept getting distracted, but since joining, all those distractions went away. It also taught me that life isn’t all about studying and school, which is how my parents raised me. BJJ made me happier and showed me that there’s more to life.”

Trey Manglona, 12-year-old from Cha Cha Ocean View Middle School, said he got into BJJ after being inspired by his cousins Rijah and Selena who

were training in California.

“Jiu-jitsu made me more disciplined and respectful. At school, I treat every student, staff, and teacher with the same respect I give to my professor.”

His brother, 11-year-old Tate, also of Cha Cha Ocean View Middle School, said aside from their cousins he also followed on the footsteps of close friend Reiden.

“Jiu-jitsu has made me respectful and trained my body, mind, and spirit, both physically and mentally. I’m humbled to be ready to defend myself if needed and to set my mind on the right things through jiu-jitsu.”

Saipan International School students Mica Zevallos, 9, and Amelia Zevallos, 7, said it was their father who wanted them to learn self-defense techniques so they could learn to protect ourselves.

“We were also looking for an enjoyable physical activity that we can do with our friends. BJJ helped us boost our discipline, self-esteem, and confidence.

We both see improvement in ourselves on an ongoing basis through BJJ.”

For Alvarez, seeing students like Ma, the Manglona brothers, and Zevallos sisters grow both as athletes and individuals is deeply fulfilling.

“Seeing them excel in the sport and compete against other children brings me a sense of satisfaction,” he said.

Watching his students test their skills after months of hard training provides him with a “natural high.” One of Alvarez’s most memorable moments as an instructor was when he took his students to compete in the Pât Gon Jiu-Jitsu tournament in Guam.

“All of my kids who went to Guam won medals,” he said, a highlight of his jiu-jitsu teaching journey.

As a coach, Alvarez remains sensitive to the mental and emotional challenges that students may face, especially those dealing with issues like anxiety or depression. While he never forces anyone to compete, he

encourages them to push their boundaries at their own pace.

“The hardest part about jiu-jitsu isn’t the training,” Alvarez said. “It’s walking through the door and beginning. Once students take that first step, they often thrive.”

Reflecting on the recent “Mats on Fire” tournament held at the Garapan Central Park Roundhouse last Saturday, Alvarez expressed joy at the community’s overwhelming support.

“I was overjoyed by the turnout—not just by the num-

ber of competitors, but also by the fans who came to support the event,” he said. For Alvarez, the tournament wasn’t just about the competition; it was a celebration of community, resilience, and the growth of jiu-jitsu on the island.

Whether you’re aiming to improve your self-defense skills, increase fitness, or compete in the MMA world, Alvarez’s gym has something for everyone. Those interested in joining or learning more can reach out to Alvarez at (670) 783-4MMA.

## SANTOS

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Second place was Jordan Ruiz at 20:30, and third place was Jayden Lim at 22:05.

In the women’s division, Bang cleared everyone with a time of 26:22. Second place was Angela Tafinger at 27:18, and third was Shawna Brennfleck with 28:30.

Santos, the high school junior, said of his incredible run that morning, “I wanted to run again since a lot of the SIS community were running, too. I still had some energy left in me and after winning the first one I initially planned to at least get Top 3 on the second run.”

He said of the course, “It was a bit hard with a lot of uphill, but it made the course fun coming back as it was all downhill. I was way prouder to finish first in the first race [high school cross country]. I was going against many of

the best runners in Saipan and they helped push me. I also finished with a much larger crowd so the environment felt nicer, too.”

For Dr. Ron Snyder, SIS headmaster and coach and meet director, he said of this year’s turnout, “The turnout was absolutely amazing. It far exceeded expectations and was the biggest All Schools event and Gecko 5000 Fun Run to date. With the parents who were there supporting their students, we far exceeded 1000 people for the event and 750 were registered participants.”

He added, “SIS really showed its school spirit with many of the runners turning around after their All Schools Races and participating in the Open 5K run as well. Nash Santos handily won the HS Boys race with a sub-19 minute mile 5K and then turned around and won the Open 5K Division an hour later, taking home two gold medals.”

## NAKAMURA

From page 16

For Palacios, he said of his award, “This one is for my grandpa [Francisco] ‘Tan Ko’ Palacios, keeping the legacy alive! It’s really cool having the opportunity to do what I love and just to showcase what the young talents have in store. It was shocking knowing the chances of winning this award were slim heading towards the end of the season

but it all worked out well! I made it worth it every chance I had on the mound.”

The lefty hurler added, “My main goal this season was to work hard for the Mini Games next year. I’ll be back next season for sure, hopefully in blue and white! I’d like to thank my family, the fans, and my teammates for supporting me through the season, definitely one to remember!”

As for league coordinator, SBL’s Shine Tenorio said of the season, “It was successful

and we had the most teams I think ever in an SBL season at 13 teams. It was pretty long due to weather delays and lighting issues but overall, it was a success.”

He then gave a big shout out to Alvin Takai, the Northern Marianas Sports Association crew—Nate Guerrero, Janelle Pangilinan, Edgar, the cleaning lady, and Roselyn Monroyo, Derron Flores, chief statistician Ray Palacios, Chuck Cabrera and his wife Luisa, Jojo Alepuyo and his crew, Brad

Ruzala, Trey, and Robbie for the commentary, the CNMI Umpire Association and the title sponsor Tan Holdings for making the season a success.

“Also, to my fellow board members on working hard to make the season happen... and to all the teams for doing their part in making the season a success. We hope to see all the teams back in March 2025 for the next SBL league. Now we’re on to the masters league with the tentative opening in mid-November.”





**Mets continue wild ride with win over Brewers in playoff opener**  
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# Saipan Tribune Sports

**A March 2025 marathon trio: Japan, Saipan, Seoul**  
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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

## Santos, Bang top Open 5K of Gecko 5000



ED DELA CRUZ

First place in the Open 5K women's division of the Gecko 5000, Ann Bang, runs through the turnaround point of the 5K race in the Gecko 5000 just before the Suicide Cliff last Saturday.



ED DELA CRUZ

Three-time boys high school cross country winner and Open 5K first place, Saipan International School's Victor Nash Santos runs through the turnaround point of the 5K race in the Gecko 5000 just before the Suicide Cliff last Saturday.

By LEIGH GASES  
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REPORTER

Out of the 750 registered participants for the Gecko 5000—the biggest participation of this event to date—cross-country repeat winner Victor Nash Santos along with avid runner Ann Bang topped the Open 5K Division that was held concurrently with the third qualifier of the PSS/NMA All Schools Cross-Country 2024-2025 at the Banzai Cliff last Saturday morning.

The 5K course stretched from the Banzai Cliff to just up the road toward Suicide Cliff and back.

Saipan International School's Santos is still the fastest runner this cross-country season and added another first-place finish under his belt in the open division. He finished first in the high school division 3-mile race, had a quick break, then ran the open with a time of 19:48.

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## Nakamura, Saralu are SBL MVPs

By LEIGH GASES  
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REPORTER



The long-awaited conclusion to the 2024

Tan Holdings-Saipan Baseball League season finally came last Monday at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Baseball Field, with the Cardinals crowned champions once again, followed by an awards ceremony that named Harry Nakamura and Nokki Saralu the league's most valuable players.

Nakamura of the Bandits bagged the regular season MVP award as well as the batting title. In 25 at-bats, he collected 16 hits for the best batting average of .640.

Nakamura was also the RBI champion with a league-leading 17 runs batted in.

As for the championship MVP, it was awarded to the Cardinals' Saralu.

Harry's brother, Franko, for his exceptional defensive plays, won the Golden Glove award for the infield. For the outfield, the Golden Glove award was given to the Blue Jays' James Salalila.

As for the Catcher of the Year, it was the Cardinals' Jerald Cabrera.

The Manager of the Year was the pennant champions Tanapag Falcons' Roy Magofna.

The runner-up were the Padres. (trophy donated by Pete Igitol and Mathilde Igitol).

The Sportsmanship Award was given to Blue Shark. (trophy also donated by Pete Igitol and Mathilde Igitol).

Meanwhile, Ben Flores, Dennis Cabrera, Eli Aughen-



LEIGH GASES

Championship MVP Nokki Saralu of the Cardinals poses with his award along with Saipan Baseball League and Next Level Media's Kyle Hocog, left, during the awards ceremony of the 2024 Tan Holdings-Saipan Baseball League last Monday at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Baseball Field.



LEIGH GASES

On behalf of regular season MVP Harry Nakamura, his brother Franko, center, who is also the Golden Glove award winner for the infield, accepts his award. He poses with Saipan Baseball League and Next Level Media's Kyle Hocog, left, during the awards ceremony of the 2024 Tan Holdings-Saipan Baseball League last Monday at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Baseball Field.

baugh, Jesus Iguel, and Tony Tenorio all bagged the Home Run Champion award with one homer each.

The Triples Champion was Antonio Norita with three.

The Doubles Champion was Brian Camacho at six and the Runs Champion award was shared between Poland Masaharu and Jerald Cabrera at 20 each.

For the pitching leaders, Benji Palacios of the Blue Jays was the top dog and was crowned the ERA champion with the lowest earned run

average of 0.53. He dominated seven games and 26.2 innings, had two earned runs, allowed 14 hits, and had a three win and no loss record.

In the other pitching category, the strikeout king was Jose Lizama Jr. with 46. Palacios was tied for second at 36 with Aaron Camacho; Jason Reyes had 31; Jeffrey Lizama, Keahi Omupas, and K.J. Villagomez struck out 27; Jylon Sablan shut down 26; and R.J. Riungel collected 20 strikeouts.

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## How debacle on Tinian became genesis of Trench Tech

By JERCY DIANA MAXIMO  
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CORRESPONDENT

For Justis "Cuki" Alvarez, seeing the new generation of mixed martial arts practitioners warms the heart, especially if he looks back and it's already been 20 years since he started Trench Tech Purebred Saipan.

He said in 2004, as MMA surged in popularity across the globe, a pivotal moment unfolded at the Tinian Fiesta, an annual celebration on the island of Tinian. A friend running the Fiery Fighting Islands Promotion—a local cage-fighting organization—asked Alvarez to assemble a team of 10 fighters from Saipan to compete against 10 fighters from Guam.

Alvarez recalled this was a time when MMA was gaining popularity, and many islanders were eager to compete. However, when Alvarez's team fought, all 10 of them lost.

"The problem wasn't a lack of desire to fight," Alvarez said. "It was simply that they lacked the skills."



JERCY DIANA MAXIMO

Trench Tech Purebred Saipan founder Justis "Cuki" Alvarez and the winners for the "Mats on Fire" tournament are all smiles with their medals at the Garapan Central Park Roundhouse last Saturday afternoon.

He explained that even the best stand-up fighters, those skilled at kicking and punching, were vulnerable if taken to the ground. Without the ability to grapple and defend themselves, the Saipan fighters were at a disadvantage. These losses ignited Alvarez's determination to improve the skill set of local fighters. He brought jiu-jitsu trainers from abroad to teach the techniques essential for success in MMA.

"Jiu-jitsu is a big part of the game to fight competitively

in the cage," he explained.

Now, 20 years later, Alvarez is celebrating two decades of teaching mixed martial arts on Saipan. He brought Trench Tech Purebred Saipan to the island in November 2004, and since then, his focus has broadened beyond preparing fighters for MMA. Teaching kids jiu jitsu has become a core part of his mission.

"It builds self-esteem," said Alvarez, emphasizing that the gym's slogan is "We're going to make your child bully-proof." He explained that the

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